

To

My WIFE

PREFACE.

This story, for which the author has no apology except his own willful determination to write it, was, like two preceding stories, read one chapter at a time to his Sunday evening congregation during the winter of 1892 and '93.

The scenes of the Academy life are taken from the famous school at Andover, Mass., where the author spent five of the happiest years of his life.

Charles M. Sheldon. Central Church,

ToPEKA, Kansas.

CONTENTS.

THE TWENTIETH DOOR.

CHAPTER 1

A PERIL.

Picture to yourself a simple, almost severe rolling prairie landscape as it looks in the early fall just after the first frosts have browned the grasses and curled

the leaves of the rosin weed into spindles. Here and there is a big black patch where some farmer more anxious than the rest has burned a fire break around his cabin and haystacks. An Indian summer haze is in the air and a blue mist of color all about the horizon.

Close by an unusually large log house, standing bare and alone on the very top of one of the larger mounds or swells of the undulating prairie, is a big pile of freshly dug earth, — black dirt, yellow loam and blue clay, — the cause of" it all being a rude windlass with a rope having a bucket attached to each end. Turning the handle of the windlass is a thick-set,serious-featured young man of about nineteen or twenty.

Suddenly a voice sounds from the depths below.

" Be careful up there! First thing you know there'll be a funeral down here and nothing to pay the gravedigger with!"

The young man pulling up the bucket of heavy clay turns pale through the bronze of a face exposed to much outdoor weather as he sees the cause of the warning from the voice at the bottom of the shaft. One of the posts of the windlass has been sunk too near the edge of the shaft, and the weight of the bucket of clay has begun to crack off a portion of the wall of earth. Unless he can get the bucket to the top very soon, the whole windlass, together with a great lump of solid earth, will inevitably cave in and rush down the hole, burying in almost sure death the person at the bottom.

There is only one thing to be done and the young

man at the top does it with a firmness and rapidity that are admirable. He seizes the rope at the end of which is hanging the empty bucket and makes a half turn with it about the handle of the windlass in such a way as to prevent its slipping; then throwing himself down flat on the ground on the side of the shaft opposite the dangerous earth crack he pulls up with his hands the heavy bucket of clay as far as he can, thus taking its weight off the windlass.

His quickness prevents an immediate accident. The post of the windlass ceases to sink and the dangerous lump of earth does not crack off. But lying down as he is, the young man can not pull the heavy bucket out of the shaft, and he is fearful of trying to regain his knees or his feet lest he jar the ground and precipitate the mass into the hole. Under these critical circumstances a rapid dialogue takes place between him and the person at the bottom.

" What's the matter ? What are you doing ? "

" Matter enough. Did n't you see the dirt crack up here ? "

" Yes; but is it serious? Can't you pull up the bucket and then let down the rope so I can crawl out ? "

" No, it 's all I can do to hold the bucket here and keep the weight of it off the windlass. Good God, Paul, if that dirt comes in it will kill you sure!

" Help! help! " the young man shouted with all his might. He paused, thinking he heard a voice.

The person at the bottom of the shaft seemed listening also. Then he spoke with a little tremble. " It seems hard to die down here like a rat in a hole. If I

should be killed, tell mother — "

Suddenly a voice was heard from the inside of the house. It seemed to come from some one lying down on a bed close by one of the large double windows. The day was not chilly and the window was partly open.

« What is the trouble, David ? "

" Mother, Paul is in danger at the bottom of the well. An earth crack started by one of the windlass posts. I caught the rope of the bucket as it was coming up, and I am lying down on the ground now and holding it up, so as to take the weight off the post. But I can't do any more than hold it the way I am, and the dirt may crack off and fall any minute. Is Ruth in the house ? "

All this was spoken in a loud tone. Then there was a terrible pause. In a moment, however, the voice from inside the house spoke clear and sweet.

"Ruth is here, and I have just told her to go to the kitchen table and get the sharpest knife there and bring it out to you. You can certainly hold the bucket up with one hand long enough to cut the rope. Tell Paul to stand over as far as he can at the bottom; then cut the rope and let the bucket fall near the side of the shaft. Then unwind the rope left above on the windlass and let it down for Paul to climb out. If you don't have enough, there is a coil of clothesline right here behind the door. Pray to God, David, and don't get nervous. Do as I say."

David, lying on his face, holding on to the terrible weight that already began to make his muscles crack and his shoulders wrench with pain, never forgot the

quiet voice which spoke in that hour of peril. When Ruth, a girl fifteen years of age, came running out with the knife, he had braced himself to do just as he was advised. He called out to Paul —" Stand over opposite the bucket! I am going to cut the rope and let the thing fall! There 's room enough for it, is n't there, without hitting you ? Look out, Ruth; don't come any nearer ! "

" Yes, there 's room if the bucket falls down the side of the wall," cried the boy below.

" All right! Look out for yourself!"

David, by the exercise of the last ounce of strength, held on with one hand, while with the other he cut the rope. With a rush, the bucket with its heavy contents fell down the shaft. David peered down anxiously.

" Hurt any ? "

"No; but the end of the rope struck me in the face. Let down the rope from above, won't you ? "

David sprang to his feet and carefully uncoiled what rope still ran about the windlass. Ruth ran in and brought out the piece of rope by the door, lie tied it on and let it down. Paul seized it, and, being an expert climber, by bracing his feet and back against the well-shaft, he soon appeared at the mouth. As he scrambled out on the side where David and Ruth both stood to help him out, the mass of dirt, which had hung threateningly during the short period described, fell with a thundering crash into the well. carrying with it a large part of the windlass and burying under several feet of dirt the place where Paul had stood only a minute before.

That young man, two years younger than his brother, stained and soiled with clay and trembling; from the peril just escaped, sat down on the pile of dirt and said,

« That settles it!"

" Settles what? " asked David, whose nerves were not of the sort easily disturbed.

" Settles this well business and this ranching business generally for me. I Ve had enough of it. I tell you " —

Just then the sweet voice from within the house came through the window. "David, Paul, you are safe! I hear your voices. Come in and tell me about it."

Paul rose at once, and with David and Ruth went into the house and up to the side of a bed which w.is in a corner of the room which some time we may stop to describe. But the most important and interesting thing of all in that room was the person whom the two boys called " mother," as they went up to her side and stood there looking at the face and form with the greatest respect and reverence.

She had b6en an invalid for eight years. The disease was of such a nature that she could lie down or sit up in a partially recumbent position; but she could not walk nor, indeed, move, the lower half of her body without assistance. But her mind retained its strength, and her general vigor of judgment and evenness of temper gave her an appearance almost like that of robust health. Her children never thought of her as a helpless sufferer. There was not the slightest attempt on their part to take advantage of the fact that their mother was unable to rise and

walk and do as other people. There was complete authority in the frail being who suffered on that bed every day. As Paul and David ^stood by her side they kept the attitude of boys who stand in the presence of a superior who is both loved and highly honored.

" Were you in much danger, my son?" Mrs. Sidney took Paul's hand and clasped her thin white fingers about it.

"Ask David, mother. He knows better than I do."

David, thus referred to, replied with more emotion than he was in the habit of exhibiting: " Why, mother, I think it was a very narrow escape. The dirt that caved in would certainly have buried Paul alive. You can thank mother, Paul, for saving your life. I am afraid I never should have thought of cutting the rope."

Paul bent down and kissed his mother and a tear fell on her face as he did so. "Mother, I never thought I was in such peril. You know we are all the time getting into hard places out here. You remember when David and I got caught between the bluff and the ravine by the big prairie fire and had to stay for an hour up to our necks in the deep pool while the timber burned around us. I never felt nearer death than then. But I believe I would rather burn up than be buried alive. Wouldn't you, Ruth ? "

" I would n't rather do either," replied Ruth, who was always on the watch lest Paul should get her to make statements that would involve her in a logical absurdity.

But Paul seemed too much dispirited to follow up his attack this time. His mother released Ins hand and

both the boys sat down in the room while Ruth went out and began to prepare the dinner. It was about half past eleven when the cave-in of the well took place.

Mrs. Sidney could easily see that something was agitating Paul more than the recent accident. Finally she said, "You may as well tell what you think, Paul. If you don't we shall all be made miserable trying to guess. Come now, my son, out with it! You know you have never yet had any secrets from us."

" Well, mother," burst out Paul, as if the torrent in him would not stand being pent up any longer, " I am sick of this life on the farm, and I want to go to school and college ! "

" I don't see how I can ranch alone!" said David rather sharply.

" You can run it alone as well as both of us have done it so far. I don't see as we have done any tiling except run it into the ground, anyway."

" If you mean the well hole, we certainly have run that into the ground this morning," said David, dryly.

"Yes, that's a specimen of the way things go. Look at that," — Paul spoke excitedly, in his nervousness flicking a bit of clay off his knee. "Here we have been digging for water since a week ago last Wednesday—more than ten days — and not a sign of water or kerosene oil or any other liquid. And this cave-in has filled up at least twelve feet, two days' hard digging gone to glory — "

" Paul, Paul, you forgot I asked you not to use that expression." Mrs. Sidney spoke quietly and Paul

colored and stammered out, " Mother, I beg pardon. I did n't mean it. Of course they have n 't gone to glory, but the other place, and I wish all the rest of the old well was there too."

" My son, you are excited now ; calm down. This is not a political gathering, and you know we are not deaf."

"Now, mother," said Paul, more quietly, "you know the old well has been an awfully exasperating piece of work. Just think! More than fifty feet deep, and we had struck blue clay and no more sign of water than if we had been digging into a haystack."

" Some of the haystacks you have built this fall will have water in them if it ever rains," said David. " If ever a fellow tried to build a haystack like a water trough, you are the one, Paul. You were not cut out for a farmer."

" That's it," replied Paul, more good-naturedly than one would suppose after such a thrust. " I hate the whole business. I don't wonder Adam went to the bad when he was given charge of all the Garden of Eden and told to take care of all the live stock and subdue ' em and make ' em gee around. I hate to milk, and I always step on myself when I plow, and I 'm always getting kicked by one of the mules, or hooked by one of the steers, or stabbed somewhere with a pitchfork, or breaking my neck falling off some load or other."

" How many times have you broken your neck this week ? " asked his mother, dryly.

" O well, I might as well break it as run so many risks! I almost wished while I was down in the well this

morning that the whole thing would cave in on me and bury me deeper than Pharaoh's army."

" You climbed out pretty quick though when you got hold of the rope," retorted David.

" Pooh! It was just instinct. A cat would do the same thing."

" If you want to commit suicide " — began David, when Mrs. Sidney interrupted, —

" There boys, you don't mean what you say. Paul, come here and sit down on the bed a minute."

Paul immediately arose and did as his mother asked. She placed her hand on the boy's brow and pushed back the thick brown hair, and gazed very lovingly into his face. Paul smiled and Mrs. Sidney said as she answered the look, "Paul, what do you really want to do ? "

" I want to quit farming and go to school."

" What do you want to study for ? The ministry, or medicine, or the law ? "

" Mother, I never could be a preacher; that's certain. And a doctor has to get up nights and go out in all sorts of weather, and I never could do that; and a lawyer has got to be great on argument, and I hate that. The only thing I care about is journalism. I want to be the editor of an influential city daily."

Mrs. Sidney looked amused. At the same time a shadow of anxiety passed over her face.

David broke the silence by saying, " That's all very fine; but where's the money to come from to carry out this scheme for an education ? You know the ranch is mortgaged and we have barely paid the interest the past year. And here 's Ruth growing up

into a woman, and pretty soon she will have to have something better than she can get in the town school. For the life of me I can't see how we are to make both ends meet this winter."

"Well, I tell you I'm just sick of the whole thing, mortgage and interest and grasshoppers and hail and drought and milking time and all. I wish they were in glory — no I mean in kingdom come. Mother, you never told me not to use that expression. It's the first time I ever thought of using it. But I'm sick of all this. I won't dig another spoonful of dirt out of that old well if we have to wait for an artesian well to grow to get water. I'm dead sick of lugging water from the neighbors, too. I don't see what made us come to this forsaken place, anyway I"

Paul rose up, and unable to contain himself any longer, he walked out of the room and out of the house, not even replying to Ruth who called after him, "Where are you going, Paul? Dinner is almost ready."

David and his mother looked at each other a minute in silence. Then Mrs. Sidney spoke.

"Poor boy! We shall have to make it possible somehow for him to go to college. But I don't see how just at this time. How much is the mortgage now, David?"

"Twelve hundred dollars. And we were behind with our last interest money and another payment is due in four months. I don't see how I can run the farm, if Paul goes. We, can't afford to hire help. Yet the boy is unhappy and dissatisfied. I have seen it for some time. Dear me!" continued honest David,

"if hard work would accomplish anything I would be willing to get up before daylight and work until pitch dark to earn the money and send Paul off. But we don't seem to get ahead any, no matter how many hours we put in. Why can't people manage to get along in this world without money ? "

" Some of them do; at least they get along with very little, the same as we do. But we must contrive some way to let Paul leave, David. We will pray about it."

"You pray, mother, and I will work. I don't think my praying would do much good. And so far, as Paul says, the work does n't seem to do much good either. But something may happen to better things. As they are now they couldn't be much worse. I can't do anything with Paul lately. He has lost all interest in the farm."

David rose and looked a little vexed, tliinking no doubt of Paul's actions, when Mrs. Sidney said, her voice trembling for tlie first time during the conversation, " David, be patient with the boy. Remember he is two years younger than you are. And his longing to go to school is perfectly natural." The hard look on David's face vanished at once. " All right, mother!" He waved his hand to the invalid as he went out of the room.

David was a remarkably undemonstrative youth, but his mother seemed to be as well satisfied as if he had promised whole volumes.

As soon as the boy left the room Mrs. Sidney took a well-worn book from a little shelf on the wall close by the bed. She read a few moments, then prayed, and seemed wonderfully strengthened by her

communion with her heavenly Father. David went out to the barn and found Paul sitting disconsolately on the edge of the rough manger.

"Dinner's ready, Paul."

"I don't care ! I don't want any."

David almost lost his temper. Only the memory of the mother saved Paul a sharp rebuke.

"Better come in; Ruth will feel disappointed if you don't."

He said nothing more but turned and went back to the house. As he came in, Ruth inquired,

"Isn't Paul coming ? I cooked some of his favorite sweet potatoes."

"I think he will be here soon," replied David. He had hardly washed himself and taken his seat at the table when Paul appeared.

"I'll be there as soon as I've washed. Don't wait for me," he said.

He seemed a little ashamed of himself, and tried to make amends by praising Ruth's potatoes ; but the meal was not a cheerful one, though the door into the bedroom stood open and Mrs. Sidney made a pleasant remark now and then.

It may be well for us to know something more about this family before we go on with its history.

Mr. Sidney had been a successful merchant in New England. During the great financial panic which swept over the country in 1857, he had become involved through generous assistance given to friends, and in all his after life he had never recovered his former prosperity. He had married quite late in life and Mrs. Sidney had been an invalid

for several years in their New England home. It was partly in the hope of improving her health and partly in expectation of repairing his own ruined fortunes that Mr. Sidney had gathered together every available dollar and in the great stream of emigration which flowed into a certain territory in the West, in 1882, had bought a ranch and gone into the cattle business.

The venture was a total failure. Two years after coming to the new country, Mr. Sidney, disappointed, disheartened, and worn out with failure, lay down one day in the log house built by himself and his two boys, and died after a brief illness, which the physician declared to be more the result of mental discouragement than any physical disease, leaving to his two sons and one daughter the care of the farm, which was heavily mortgaged.

It was a big load for three young people to carry. David at the time was seventeen, strong and old for his age. Paul was fifteen, just at the age when boys need most a wise and loving father^s care, and Ruth was a very conscientious and thoughtful girl of thirteen.

In the crisis of home matters the invalid developed an unexpected strength and energy. Under her direction a part of the large farm was sold. It was only when affairs began to be settled that it was found that Mr. Sidney was liable for certain sums of money on a note signed with other parties who had dishonestly left the country without settlement. These notes Mrs. Sidney regarded it her moral duty to pay.

It was under such circumstances that David and Paul took hold of the farm. Up to the present time the failure of crops, the death of stock, and the payment of interest, which robbed the family of necessaries, had been discouragements enough to try the most sanguine and industrious souls that ever toiled for daily bread. It was the sweet invalid's constant faith and good cheer that sustained all the others. She was unable to sit, or stand on her feet. Euth did the house-work, the boys taking turns in helping her at dish-washing and other duties. The mother, as she lay helpless during the long days when the boys were at work away from the house, knitted many dozen pairs of mittens which were sold in the little town five miles from the farm, and with the slender means thus obtained helped to provide for the household expenses.

But the struggle was a bitter one. On top of it all came Paul's dissatisfaction and his outburst caused by the well disaster. The thoughts of all were now turned sharply towards the new problem: how to make it possible to get money enough to start the boy off to academy and college. To David it seemed an impossibility. To the mother, as she lay and prayed by herself, nothing seemed impossible to the children of God, but she could not yet see the way made clear. To Ruth, rapidly growing up in that isolated prairie farmhouse into a very attractive young woman, . and beginning to be conscious of ambitious longings of her own, no possible[^] answer to the question presented itself. Paul brooded over the matter during dinner, and before he and David

started out to get water from the nearest neighbor's he went in to see his mother.

" Mother," he said, as he sat down on the bed, " I feel sorry for what I said. It is nonsense for me to think of going to school. I will try to give up the idea."

" But do you still want to go to college? "

" Yes, mother, I do. It would be useless for me to try to make believe that I like this kind of life. I hate it. But what is the use of trying to think of such a thing as college when we have the load of this farm, and father's debts to pay off."

The mother did not reply at once. At last she said, "Be as patient as you can, my son. The great Father certainly loves you. He wants you to be happy. He will provide a way for you."

Paul kissed his mother and went out to his work. All the afternoon as he toiled with David at a task which he disliked more than any other, those words sounded in his ears, "The great Father certainly loves you. He wants you to be happy. He will provide a way for you."

When the day's work was done, the boys and Ruth came into their mother's room and sat down, each with a Bible. It had been the family custom for years to have a Bible reading and prayers at the close of each day. On these occasions the greatest freedom prevailed. Each read two verses from the passage or chapter in the order of their sitting. Comments were freely made and questions asked. In all this Mrs. Sidney obeyed the great law of her life, which was to discover and obey the will of her heavenly Father. Her children had no foolish shame in talking of

religious things such as many families seem to feel. The Bible was to them the grandest book in the world; and to talk familiarly of such things as death, and heaven, and God, and Christ, and sin, and forgiveness, was as natural as talking of the weather or the seasons or the news of the day.

The Bible lesson for the day was the sixth chapter of Matthew, beginning with the twenty-fourth verse.

Mrs. Sidney began the reading:

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? "

"Well, now, mother," said Paul, "don't you think it would be a queer sort of a world if nobody took any thought about how to get a living? Why, we have to take thought. That's about all we do think about lately. How can we help it? "

"The Revised version says, 'Be not anxious for your life'" said David, who had recently purchased a Revised New Testament and was studying it in connection with the old version. "And it seems to me that is what Christ meant. He knew we had to plan for getting food and clothes. He certainly did not mean to have us live like savages without knowing where the next meal was coming from."

"Yes, David, you are right. It means don't worry about food and clothes and money. Christ knew that

anxiety never helped people to pay their debts or provide for their families. The worry, indeed, hinders a man from doing his best. His brain can not work so well, his actions will not count for so much as if he is cheerful and free from worry. Did you ever know fretting and worrying to pay any debts or get any more clothing for a family?"

"Don't you think, mother, that it's a pretty hard thing for a man to keep from getting anxious when he's in debt?" asked David.

"I've got to the point where I feel like saying, Let the other man get anxious — the one to whom the money is due," interrupted Paul, who was probably thinking of the note his father had signed and which his mother insisted on paying.

"Yes," said Mrs. Sidney, answering David's question; "it is hard; but our great Master tells us not to get anxious or worried. If we are in debt and are trying as honestly and as hard as we can to get out of it, we do not gain anything by fretting, by getting the blues, by losing our sweetness of temper, by getting soured and disagreeable. It won't pay one dollar any quicker. Jesus knew that when he said, 'Don't be anxious.'"

"But don't you think, mother," put in Ruth, who sometimes surprised them all by asking a question that revealed a good deal of keenness of observation, "that if a man is poor and in debt, people will think he is dishonest or shiftless if he doesn't appear anxious about his debts? Won't they say, There is a man who owes me money and yet he seems to be taking things pretty easy; he isn't worrying any about it'?"

"Well, my dear, what difference does it make what people say so long as we are doing what God commanded us to do ? The first thing we are to think of is,'What is God's will?' Then when we find out, the next thing is to do it."

There was a pause and then David went on with the reading.

" Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

"Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? "

"That is, by being anxious can add one cubit. Don't you think we ought to take the meaning given in the Revision all through this passage? "

" Yes, by all means," answered his mother. " That explains Christ's thought better. The old version does not make it so clear."

Paul read on: -" And why take ye thought [why are ye anxious] for raiment ? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

Ruth continued: -" Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith ?

"Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or Wherewithal shall we be clothed? "

" That is, be not anxious," Paul added, looking over

to Ruth, " how we shall go to college."

Ruth looked a little shocked, but her mother said, " Yes; Christ would say just that to you, Paul, were he to speak to you now."

"Do you think he is interested in me in that way?" asked Paul doubtfully.

"Why, it says so. ' Are ye not much better than they?' If God cares for grass and flowers and birds, he must certainly care for human beings."

" Yes, but he has a good many to think of besides me."

" He would n't be God if he couldn't think as much of one as of another, would he? We poor human creatures use up our strength in loving or caring for a few souls; God can take us all into his great bosom, and every child in it is a favorite. You can be sure, Paul, that your heavenly Father is thinking of you and caring for you this very minute."

" Do you think he is going to show us how we can lift the mortgage off this farm? " David asked the question slowly, and the children waited curiously for the mother's answer.

She simply said to David, " Let me read my verses first." So she read : - " For after all these things do the Gentiles seek: for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

" There is the answer. It says plainly that if we seek first the kingdom of God we shall have the other things. The very first thing to do to pay our debts is

to seek first God's kingdom and God's righteousness."

"Mother, haven't you been seeking first God's kingdom and righteousness, and aren't you in debt and needing many things to-day?"

Paul put this question with his usual frank bluntness.

It was a hard question to answer. In her heart of hearts Mrs. Sidney felt that she could truthfully say that through all the long painful years of her illness she had tried to seek first the kingdom of God. Yet the other things had not been added so far. In regard to material things it looked as if God had not kept his part of the promise. Still the mother had not lost her faith. She turned her face to Paul with a look that remained with him all his life as she answered:

"I am not yet done with this earth, and know not what blessings my Father has in store for me. I know he does not always answer our prayers as we wish. I also know that I do not feel as if he had broken his promise. It is true we are in debt; but it is also true we have always had enough to eat and wear. Isn't that so?"

Paul looked a little queer, and his mother said, "Speak out. Tell us what you think."

"Well, then, I don't feel as if we had enough of some things. We never can buy any books. And we had to give up our subscription to the *Century* a year ago. And I have to wear that old faded overcoat this winter and can't go to anything decent. I feel ashamed to go to church in it; and we always sit right in front of the Clinton girls and they poke fun all through the

sermon."

Paul was getting angry again at the thought of the family poverty. Ruth sat where she could see the look of disgust on his face. Something about it struck her so comically that she laughed outright. David joined her and even the mother smiled a little. But she did not rebuke her younger boy. If only he had known how her great loving heart ached for him as she thought of his sensitive feelings and prayed that bitterness might not flow out of his poverty to spoil his own life and the lives of others!

Paul, as usual after an outburst, felt ashamed of himself. Ruth's laughter never angered him. There was something so sweet about it that he could not help enjoying it. He simply said,

" Oh, well, you'll know how it is when some fellow comes courting, and you wish you had a new gown, or something stylish."

Ruth flushed up prettily. " There's no danger. The only fellows I care about are you and David, and I hope you like the dress I have on now."

" Why, Ruthie," replied Paul, captured by the air that Ruth assumed, " you are fit for a ball. I'll stand by you -"

The mother interrupted gently, " We are getting a little away from the text. There is one verse not read yet. David, it's your turn. The last verse."

So David finished the chapter.

" Take therefore no thought, [be not therefore anxious] for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for [be anxious for] the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

"What has been the evil of this day, children?"

"The old well," replied Paul promptly; "and it was sufficient to last a week."

"But think if you had been killed during the caving in of the well! How much greater evil that would have been. Dear boy, how your mother's heart would ache now if she knew you had met with so terrible a death."

"Why, mother, you don't really care all that for me, do you?"

Paul put the question in a bantering tone to conceal a tendency to shed a few tears, knowing very well, as every boy knows, that his mother's love was the nearest thing to God's of any that he could ever know.

For reply Mrs. Sidney laid her hand on the boy's head as he sat close by the bed. She did not need to say anything. It was quiet in the room now; and the mother, as her custom was, offered the prayer which closed the Bible reading.

" Dear heavenly Father, we thy children love thee. We want to do thy will; we want to be led by thy Truth. We thank thee now at the close of this day for thy great love for us. We thank thee that one of our dear circle has been spared from a dreadful death. We thank thee that now we are able with reason's blessed strength to say, * The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.' We thank thee tonight for the great things worth having, every one of which we possess. First of all, for thy love which has been shown to us and all the world in Jesus Christ our Lord; and then for the freedom from sin which we feel owing to our

faith in the forgiving power of our blessed Saviour. Then for our happy belief in eternal life as we rest ourselves on the assurance of His own words, 'Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.' For, these great gifts, O Life-giver, we thank thee from hearts that reflect thine own nature. If we had no other possible reasons, so far as we can see, for praising thee, we feel as if these were enough to call forth our praise in a world without end. For everything else without these blessings would be but to gain the whole world and lose our lives.

"Now we ask thee to guard us while we sleep. May we awake to the glorious light of another day asking of thee to 'help us seek first thy kingdom.' Deliver us from foolish or nervous or selfish anxiety about what we shall eat and wear. May we have larger thoughts. May we think more of life and not so much of money and food and the wherewithal. Yet, as thou knowest we need all these physical things, give us strength and wisdom to get them. Show us how best we may pay our indebtedness; how the dear boy, thine own child, heavenly Father, may have his desire gratified and go to school. In all these things which belong to this life, give us the direction of thine infinite and loving wisdom. We would not walk alone if we could. Thy companionship is very dear to us. It soothes us as we pass through this earthly paradise blurred and disfigured by man's selfishness. Nevertheless may it be Paradise to us—heaven here. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in us. And to thee, in the threefold display of thy nature, to thoe. Father, Son and Holy Spirit, shall be all the praise every day and

through all time. Amen."

The children kissed their mother, and Ruth went upstairs to bed. The boys slept below, and after locking up and saying good night they went into their room, which opened into their mother's. At the times when she had been obliged to take certain medicines David had risen and cared for her. His strong rugged quiet nature adapted him to the duties of nurse.

For a little while the brothers lay awake and talked over the day's accident and discussed the feasibility of going at the well-digging next day. Nothing was said about Paul's desire to leave the farm. But long after David and the rest in the house were asleep, Paul lay wide awake, his restless mind going over and over every possible scheme for getting away to school. He heard the clock strike twelve and still there was no answer in his own thought to the problem. At last, exhausted with thinking, he fell asleep, unable to see how by any means he could leave the farm and all its hated drudgery and satisfy his longing for an education.

Yet the answer was nearer than he dreamed. Who shall say that its drawing near was not owing to the sublime and heroic faith of that feeble yet gigantic soul in the next room who, with her last waking moment, crowded close up to the heavenly Father the prayer, "Grant the dear child his desire." For is it not true, "According to your faith be it unto you"?

CHAPTER 11.

THE OPENING OF SCHOOL.

Three weeks passed by on the Sidney farm, and still there was no answer to the problem of Paul's pet desire to go to school. He seemed to have settled down to his fate with a sort of resigned doggedness and went about doing the disagreeable tasks of a stock farm with the air of a martyr. No one was deceived by his silence. It was plainly to be seen that if ever a boy was sick of farm life Paul was that boy. The mother prayed all day that the way might be made clear. David kept up a big thinking and Ruth spent many a long hour in devising ways and means, and shed more than one tear into the dishwater as she failed to see any possible hope for Paul's getting away.

After some deliberation the boys bravely decided to dig out the dirt that had caved into the well and go on with it, if, as Paul said, they had to dig a mile and strike the roots of a volcano. The cold weather was rapidly coming on and the task of "lugging" (Paul always called it that) water from the nearest neighbor's, half a mile distant, was getting to be an exceedingly tiresome piece of work. Paul reluctantly consented to David's doing the well-digging at the bottom.

"We can use a smaller bucket and you can manage it," David said in reply to Paul's remonstrances.

The work progressed very favorably this time. Learning something from experience, the boys

blocked up the first five feet of the opening with timbers so that the earth could not cave in again. Before the end of a week David had reached blue clay again and then, owing to interruptions, the boys being obliged to go off to the river timber for wood, the work was stopped for two weeks. Then they began it again and after two more days of very hard work at a depth of sixty feet, one morning David shouted up to Paul, "We've struck it!"

"What is it, oil or molasses?" inquired Paul, who had all along been incredulous about getting any water on the top of the mound.

"Looks like water. Coming in through the walls. Here! Pull up this bucket of clay and see for yourself."

Paul tugged away at the windlass and soon hoisted a bucket of very wet blue clay over the edge of the rude curb. The sides of the bucket glistened with the welcome water. He emptied the bucket and went into the house to tell Ruth. She came out and the two leaned over the edge of the curb and shouted down to David.

"Are you in danger of drowning?" asked Paul, sarcastically.

"Not yet. The water is coming in fast, though. Can't you tie a bottle or something on the end of a string and let it down? I have scooped a hole in the clay and the water is running into it. I could dip up enough to get a taste and see if it is alkaline."

Ruth ran into the house and soon returned with an empty bottle and a ball of twine. Paul tied it on and let it down. David filled it and Paul pulled it up. The water was not very clear, but as Paul eagerly tasted it

he exclaimed, "Here 's to your health, Ruth, and good-by to any more lugging water from Peterson's. It's good sweet water! Hurrah ! Let's pour the rest of it out as a libation to the Goddess of Water!" In his excitement Paul emptied the rest of the water down the well. David howled when it struck him on the back of the neck as he was leaning over to examine the incoming stream.

However, the accomplishment of their great task made David good-natured. He soon called out, "Say, the water is just streaming in now! It's up to my ankles. Better let down the bucket and haul out so that I can dig down a little more." At the end of an hour the water was pouring in so fast that David said he was coming out. He came up on the bucket, pulling on the rope going down, and Paul and Ruth shouted when he appeared at last. With much rejoicing all three went in to talk it over with their mother, who was as much interested as if she had been able to work at the well herself.

"It's a great blessing and no mistake. The water seems perfectly sweet, and it looks as if there would be plenty of it," said David, who looked as if he had been hit by a mud cyclone.

"If we could only get a windmill now to do the work!" said Paul. "It seems such a pity to have all these prairie breezes going to waste." Nevertheless he was greatly pleased at the result of the well-digging and both boys felt a little pride that all alone they had dug a well sixty feet deep.

The very next day after the water was struck an event occurred which helped the way for Paul's

leaving the farm. It was not clear to any one at the time, but came out afterwards.

The day dawned remarkably bright and even warm. It was one of those perfect mornings in early winter when it seems as if the season, reluctant to step into the cold raw atmosphere of winter, had drawn back into the warmer chamber of autumn to enjoy it a little longer before a shivering plunge into the inevitable draughts and frosts of the icy King of the Northwest. The doors and windows of the house were open. The sun shone very warm. The cattle out in the yard stood contentedly and lazily about, and over all the prairie there was an air of soft peaceful languor almost southern in its influence and coloring.

The boys thought they would hitch up and drive into town to get some needed articles for the house, and see about getting one of their neighbors to help them stone up the well at the bottom. David went out to the barn to get the horses ready while Paul was helping Ruth do some of the housework. But just as David drove up by the door and Paul was on the point of getting into the lumber wagon with him, a curious change took place in the atmosphere. David felt it first. Sitting in the wagon where the sun beat warm from the side of the house, suddenly, a still cool breeze from the northwest chilled his face. He looked up quickly in that direction. Even as he did so, the whole aspect of sky and prairie and all between seemed to change. Far down on the horizon his keen eye could trace a slender line of cloud almost invisible but surely spreading out into a mass of gray

with a solid, well-defined border which contrasted with the deep blue of that heavenly morning sky. The cattle in the yard had become restless and some of them stood with their heads erect and those that were lying down suddenly got up on their feet.

David was cautious, as brave men often are. He called out to his mother as Paul climbed into the wagon, "Mother, I don't know as we ought to start out this morning. Can we get along without those things you wanted? It looks to me as if a blizzard was coming up."

" Oh, pshaw!" cried Paul, who was tired of the work and wanted the fun of riding to town such a morning. "Blizzard nothing! Why, it's warm enough for ice cream! I'd as soon think of a blizzard Fourth of July."

" Don't run any risk, boys," called out Mrs. Sidney. " You remember that terrible storm the first winter we were here ; and it came earlier than this if I recall it right. David, we can get along without the things from the store though we are out of kerosene oil and need a few other articles. Ruth has given you the list. But I do not want you to run any risk. If a blizzard is coming you could not get to town and back in safety,"

" Oh, come on, there 's no danger!" Paul seized the lines out of David's hands and shouted to the horses to start up. David looked sober but did not say anything. Paul shouted back, "It's all right, mother ! We'll hurry right back!" He drove out of the yard which surrounded the small grove of cotton-woods on one side of the house and the horses were soon trotting briskly over the smooth prairie road.

They had gone perhaps a quarter of a mile when David uttered an ejaculation, and before Paul knew what was happening, David had snatched the lines from his hands and was turning the horses around and heading them for home.

Paul started to say something but did not finish. Over all the northwest the bank of cloud had spread, and stretching around to the south and east were streaming banners of gray. The air had turned icy cold, and far back, on the prairie beyond the house, what looked like a solid wall of snow was marching toward them, obliterating all the distant horizon line of earth and sky. The boys had not gone fifty yards before the bank of cloud swept over the sun and the atmosphere grew gray and dull with a rapidity which only the western settlers who have witnessed these terrible changes can comprehend. Before David or Paul could realize their situation, the blizzard, in its bewildering rapidity, was upon them like a whirlwind. The snow was powdery stuff like the finest flour, or as if immense icebergs had been ground up into dust and blown out of gigantic fans all over the world. With every second the cold grew more penetrating and the wind increased in fury. Fortunately the road was still in sight as the light fine particles of icy snow blew off from the smooth surface. But after an eighth of a mile had been passed, David jumped out of the wagon and led the horses, who seemed bewildered and inclined to wander out onto the prairie. If once they lost the road the boys knew they would in all probability perish even within a stone's throw of the house. That last

short piece of road was passed over with a feeling akin to terror.

David said afterwards that he never felt more like praying than during that short time, and both boys felt a throb of thanksgiving to God when the first small Cottonwood tree at the entrance of the road leading to the house was reached. They came up by the south side of the house where they were a little protected from the terrible whirl of snow and wind and David rushed in and out again with Paul's overcoat and his own. E-uth, brave girl, seeing the coming storm, had driven the cattle into the shed and fastened the wide door just before the ice cloud struck the house. The boys, as fast as their numbed fingers would allow, unhitched the horses and hurried them into the barn. Then, at the actual peril of being lost on the way, they groped along to the house and panting for breath, entered just as the storm, now at its height, completely buried out of view every object twelve feet away. One of the most terrific blizzards ever known to the northwest raged around that lone prairie log house, and a darkness that was fearful in its awful unnaturalness settled over its inmates.

Once the family had spent its first glow of thanksgiving for the safety of the boys the question of fuel and food was raised. The storm would probably last three days. There was not a drop of oil in the house and Ruth reported a rather small supply of flour, and no eggs, butter or sugar. Mrs. Sidney felt so grateful to think her boys were with her that the matter of food did not disturb her much.

" If worst comes to worst we can kill one of the young steers," said David.

"I'd rather kill one of the old cows," said Paul. " Let's kill the mulish animal that always steps her foot in the pail just as it is full."

"I don't think we shall have to turn butchers," replied Mrs. Sidney. "We have plenty of corn meal and Ruth can keep us from starving."

"Yes, Ruth, give us corn meal griddle cakes for breakfast, and corn meal dodgers for dinner, and corn meal muffins for supper, and corn meal hash for next morning, and we 'll feel a real gratefulness in about two days," said Paul.

"We may have to burn corn for fuel, too," remarked David, seriously, as he rose to put a chunk of green Cottonwood into the stove. " That last load of wood is most gone and it is pretty poor stuff to burn."

"Oh, well, don't let us get alarmed. The good God has certainly cared for us through many perils and hard times. If we do have to burn corn it will be good fuel." The mother cheered them all with her Christian philosophy. Ah, brave uncomplaining soul in that frail tenement of clay! Truly thou art one of God's children with firmest faith in the fatherhood of Goodness.

For a minute there was silence, if it could be called silence when the house trembled from the terrific gale that tore over it. The children gathered closer around the bed of the invalid. David tried to assume an air of cheerfulness and Ruth remarked that after all they were probably better off than very many of the settlers.

" Just think if some women and children are left alone in this storm."

" Yes, or worse still, if a great number of men were caught out as we were and unable to get back."

" What a terrible thing it would be to get lost in a storm like this!" David spoke with more feeling than he was in the habit of showing.

" Hark!" cried Paul, starting up; "I 'm sure I heard a voice."

He and David ran to the window and peered out. It was impossible to see ten feet from the house. David rushed into his overcoat and Paul did the same, and pulling their caps down close and muffling their faces with shawls they stepped outside the door and listened intently. Yes, above the roar of the blizzard, distinct and shrill, came a human cry! Both boys shouted in return and then waited. There was no answer.

"The sound was off down the road toward the grove," shouted Paul to David, who simply nodded in reply. The boys shouted again and anxiously waited. There was no answer. David drew Paul back into the house.

" There is some one lost and perhaps perishing out there. We must find him."

" But," cried Ruth, " you must be careful. Remember how young Oleson perished last winter in losing his way from his own stable. Be careful, boys, won't you?"

It was true, though it might sound incredible to one unfamiliar with a storm on the plains, that during one of the terrific blizzards in the northwest a Swede

who had started from his stable to his house became bewildered in the whirling tempest of icy snow and froze to death within a stone's throw of his cabin.

There was a real danger before the boys in attempting to rescue this person who was evidently lost in the storm.

"Boys," Mrs. Sidney said with her usual quiet authority. "David, you, being the stronger, had better tie a rope about your waist and let Paul hold it near the house. Then start out in the direction of the sound. Heaven help any soul lost in this fearful tempest!"

The boys rapidly followed their mother's directions. All the rope in the house was brought into use. Fortunately the demands of the well digging had accumulated a large quantity. The boys again went outside and shouted. There was no reply or at least they could not hear any.

"Pay out the rope loose, Paul," directed David, and without more words he plunged into the storm and was at once lost to view. There were over sixty feet of rope and heavy twine altogether. Paul anxiously paid out nearly every foot of it and then waited. The whirl of the snow even in the partial protection afforded by the house almost choked him. He wondered how David would succeed. It seemed to him that he was gone a long time. Several times the rope was nearly jerked out of Paul's hands, as if David were at the extreme end of it and wishing to explore farther on. After a time which seemed very long, David emerged into view, panting and exhausted, completely covered with the ice dust and with the ice frozen to

his eyelashes. He was alone.

" I could n't find anybody," he gasped. " I was afraid I should suffocate. I had to come back. There are drifts ten feet high in the cotton woods. Lucky I had the rope. Never could tell where the house was."

The boys had to go into the house a minute and David, after removing the ice from his eyes, insisted on trying again. "There is some one out there somewhere. We ought to try to find him."

Again Paul saw his brother disappear into the blinding whirling roaring blizzard. He took a little different direction this time and as well as he could shouted at intervals. But it was like shouting into Niagara.

Again Paul waited, as it seemed to him, half an hour. At last he felt the rope jerk twice vigorously, the signal agreed upon if David found anybody. He at once pulled in the rope and this time as David appeared he half carried, half led a young man. All three entered the house and David, almost as exhausted as the rescued person, sank by his side upon the couch which Ruth had thoughtfully placed in front of the stove.

When the stranger had recovered sufficiently to tell his story he spoke in such broken English that he was with difficulty understood. But the boys in their interchange of work with many of the foreign farmers in the neighborhood had picked up more or less knowledge of German and Swedish. The young man was a Swede who had come into the town on the river just above the Sidney farm, and failing to find work there had started on foot for the next town

down the river. It was on this trip that he had been suddenly overtaken by the blizzard and losing his way would doubtless have perished if he had not stumbled upon one corner of the Sidney farm and shouted desperately for help. His name was Carlson and he seemed to be a sturdy honest lad about Paul's age. His gratitude for his deliverance was not very warmly expressed but was evidently sincere.

Mrs. Sidney looked at him as he sat gratefully spreading his hands out towards the fire. The interest in her eyes seemed to grow the longer she gazed upon the young foreigner.

After two more days the blizzard blew itself out. The severity of the storm was shown by the large number of persons found frozen to death out on the prairie. Most of them had been overtaken by the rapidity of the tempest and had become bewildered and wandered about until, exhausted, they had lain down and died. More than one ghastly form was found only a few miles from where the boys turned their horses back to go to the house.

Just one week after the "Great blizzard," as it was known, had passed away, a letter came to the farm directed to Mrs. Sidney. Paul himself had brought out the mail. He tossed the letter upon the bed, saying carelessly as he did so, "That was all the mail this time, mommee!"

His mother glanced at the postmark, and her face flushed while her fingers trembled a little as she opened the letter and read it. When she had finished she silently offered a devout prayer and all through the day she appeared to be more than usually quiet

and happy.

After the Bible reading that night the mother took the letter from the shelf where it had lain all day and said, "I want to read something for Paul's benefit."

The children had risen to say good night, but sat down again.

Carlson, who had stayed along with the family at the request of David and the mother until the work of hauling some necessary fodder for the cattle should be done, was in the room and started to go out.

The mother called after him, "Carlson, won't you stay?" So he sat down with the rest.

Mrs. Sidney read, apparently selecting passages here and there: - „We shall be more than glad to assist the boy in any way in our power. If he is willing to do any kind of honest labor he can help to work his way through. The school, as you well know, is of the highest character. There are at present four hundred pupils in it. I do not remember Paul except as a child two years old. If you think he could get along with two old maids like sister Rea and myself we shall make as much of a home for him as possible. Father is still with us and is growing feeble. He needs care, and Paul might do something for him now and then - read to him perhaps. We keep a horse and a cow. I suppose Paul could take care of them for us. We will give him his board and room for the work about the house."

There was more in the letter, but Mrs. Sidney seemed satisfied with what she had read and quietly asked Paul what he thought of it.

Paul was a little slow in grasping the meaning of the

letter. Finally he said, "Why that is the famous Veronda Academy!" Then after a pause, "Whom is the letter from, mother? "

"From Miss Coleman. She is an old friend of mine, and her father, of whom she speaks, was once under great obligations to your father, who assisted him in business matters. Miss Coleman moved to Veronda about the same time that we came out here. She lives with her father and a sister. The two ladies are called old maids. They are two of the most beautiful Christian women in the world."

"But how did they know Paul wanted to go to college?" asked Ruth eagerly.

The mother smiled. "It was in answer to prayer," she said.

"Did n't you write to her three weeks ago, mother?" inquired David, who had carried the mail into town about that time.

"Why of course I did; that was because the Father helped me to think of this way to find Paul an opportunity to get to school. Here is a partial answer to it. These friends will give Paul a good home if he will do what little work is needed about the house."

"There 's a cow to milk, Paul! That settles it. You are such a lover of cows and milking time," suggested Ruth.

Paul made a grimace but replied, " I don't mind one cow. It's lucky I know how to milk, I suppose. Why of course I would be willing to do the work for my board and lodging. How old are these ladies, mother? "

The mother smiled again as she replied, "It wouldn't be fair in me to disclose any secrets. But you can be

sure the Misses Coleman will make you think of your Aunt Sarah. It is a beautiful home to go into."

Paul was getting excited over the prospect, but there were still obstacles in the way of his going that he did not see any way of removing.

David gave utterance to one of them when he said, "Mother, I don't see even now how I am going to run the farm all alone. I might manage all right in the winter, but I am sure I could not do the work in spring and summer. And it is useless to try to hire help. We are too deeply in debt."

Mrs. Sidney was silent. Here was a real difficulty. The rest were anxiously waiting for her reply when Carlson, who had remained quietly listening, suddenly surprised them all by saying,

"I might be glad to help David awhile."

Through his brief stay with the family, as he worked with the boys, the young Swede had caught enough of the family situation to know how matters stood. He was exceedingly shy and really knew more of the English language than he was willing to admit. Mrs. Sidney had won his heart in a very short time. He felt a gratitude for his rescue much deeper than his undemonstrative nature had expressed.

Upon talking it over with David that evening, he agreed to remain on the farm and help do the work for his board and lodging and whatever David could afford to pay in money in case the crops turned out well and the cattle sold for good prices. The lad was truly grateful for the love and interest shown by the family. He was, like so many of his race, a lover of home, and there was much about the Sidney family

that attached him to it. Add to all this the fact that the prospects for getting work at that season of the year were very dubious and there was nothing remarkable in Carlson's offer to stay with David indefinitely. To the mother it seemed like another direct answer to prayer. Before the family went to bed it was definitely decided that as soon as possible Paul should start off for Veronda.

How the family managed to secure money enough to buy Paul's ticket and the little necessaries for his departure might prove interesting, but we can not enter into the details. One of the cows was sold. David succeeded in disposing of a little piece of timber down on the river which had belonged to the ranch when his father bought it. The sale of it was fortunately arranged so that David had all the wood he needed for the whiter. Somehow, as many families in straitened circumstances have succeeded in doing, they raised the money and at last Paul was ready to leave.

He went away one morning after his mother and Ruth had cried over him. At the last minute he almost broke down and repented his going, but he finally rode away from the house with David, who drove him into town and saw him off on the train. Paul's last sight of his older brother was the glimpse he caught of him standing at the head of the horses and waving his hand in good-by. As Paul went into the coach and sat down, he was surprised to find that not even the parting from his mother and Ruth had been able to wrench his feelings quite so severely as the thought of sturdy David remaining at

his post on the farm and doing battle for the family, while he, Paul, seemed to shirk the hard work and run away to school. The boy made a tremendous resolution, as every turn of the wheels carried him farther away from home, that he would make the family proud of him by winning all possible honors and making money enough to pay off all mortgages and debts. A new life was before him and after the fashion of countless boys he wreathed his future in a halo of glory, honor and riches.

In three days he was in Veronda. He found the Misses Coleman what his mother had described them. They were quiet Christian women with some peculiar ideas, no doubt, but no more peculiar than some others have.

Paul seemed to suit them exactly. He had been trained to habits of punctuality and cleanliness. Life at the Coleman house was systematic. The chores were not heavy. There was one horse and a cow and a furnace to tend. Sundry errands about the house and the care of Mr. Coleman constituted all the rest. The school life was- a new world to Paul - one that grew in attractiveness every day. Four hundred live boys opened up possibilities for fun and excitement that he, with his restless and sometimes excitable temperament, soon began to appreciate. The influence of the school was decidedly healthy in most ways.

Paul never forgot the opening remarks of the principal at chapel the first day school began. He was a little disappointed in the master's appearance. He had expected to see a large dignified man. Instead,

as soon as the bell ceased ringing there stood up on the platform a little man with a very noble head and a look that hushed every boy into quiet. The entire school according to custom rose and stood during the prayer. It was a prayer remarkable for its going to the point. Paul never ceased to wonder during his whole school life at the master's prayers. There were never two alike and every morning something was said that made him think all day. It would be impossible to estimate the power those brief prayers had over the lives of those four hundred reckless, thoughtless and sometimes irreverent boys.

This morning the master held the school a few moments to talk to them. With the first sentence he made it very clear to the most careless lad in that crowd that he was a personal friend of the little man who was talking.

" The school opens this winter term with the largest number ever known in its history. I hope the quality will be as good as the quantity. I want to say a word or two to the new boys who have entered this term. This school is yours to honor. There are very few rules. You will understand that you are here to study as well as play football. No boy will be allowed to play on the team who does not maintain an average scholarship with the rest of the school. We are not organized to turn out champion athletes but Christian gentlemen and students. What we want here is to prepare young men for higher studies and to produce character and manhood. I would much rather see every boy in this school graduate with a settled Christian character than see him able to kick

a ball two thirds across the field or knock out a home run with the bases all full. If you can do both, all right; but if you can do but one give us the noble Christian gentleman every time.

There is another thing. A great many boys coming up here for the first time have an idea that it is considered the correct thing to be a little 'tough'! I believe that is the word used. Perhaps some of you know what is meant by that term. A boy thinks he must smoke, hang up some pictures of variety actresses in his room, play cards late into the night, and occasionally run over to the city and have a spree. I want to say that we have no place for such characters in this school. It is very well understood that there is not a respectable man or boy connected with this academy who considers toughness at all necessary. This is not a reform school. We have not time to labor with those who shall attempt to interrupt the true work of this school by any foolishness. We can only say to them, you do not seem to comprehend the purpose of this institution, and it will be better for you to go where your peculiar ideas of what a student ought to be are more fully appreciated.' In the language of the poet Horace, „It is hard to part with you but we will try to bear it.”

There was a little applause from the boys in the senior class who had recently read the passage just quoted and the principal went on :—" The fact that the school has reached the highest number of students in its history will make all the more important the standard of work and influence we send out. Every student here may help to make the

school what we hope it will be. You understand it is beyond my power or the power of any or all of these teachers to make a school of which we all may be proud unless we have the hearty co-operation of every student. As I said in the beginning, the school is yours to honor. The things that will cause us disgrace are lying, shirking duty, drinking, excessive card playing, bullying, expensive habits of living, impurity of actions or speech, and any other vice or habit that shall tend to lower the dignity of purpose for which this school has always stood.

You have all come from homes where you have been taught the principles of a true manhood. You know what they are as well as I do. And I trust that as the term goes on the wishes of those who have sent you here, the prayers of mothers and the longings of fathers may have their just influence in shaping your growing determination to be true to home and God and yourselves."

The principal stopped abruptly, glanced round at the school with a firm earnest look, nodded as his custom was for the close of chapel exercises and the great school filed out to its class rooms.

Paul had made preparation for academy life by two years' study in the high school before the family had come to the farm. He found that by extra effort he could enter the middle class. That would give him two years at Veronda. He never knew what study meant before. Everything at Veronda went with a spring. The class room was a terror to the student who was unprepared. The requirements for a high grade of scholarship were severe, and woe to the

youth who thought he could have an easy time of it at Veronda and tried to have it. Such a one very soon found himself set back in the classes and viewed with a sort of pitying contempt by the great majority. There was, at the time when Paul entered this famous school, no aristocracy of wealth or family. Every boy who belonged to the academy met every other boy on an equal footing. But there was a certain aristocracy of scholarship which was not a bad thing as it practically worked. Whether a boy was from a rich family or not made little difference. But when it came to class room work a sharp line separated the high grade scholars from the lazy or incompetent. The result was a constant struggle to excel. It was the custom to applaud a splendid translation of Greek or Latin or a brilliant blackboard demonstration in mathematics. The professors encouraged the custom. It required something unusually good to call out such applause from a class. Therefore when it did come it was worth having. The first time Paul heard that hand clapping on an occasion when he had rendered a very hard passage in Homer into fairly good English verse he felt that tingle of delight which nothing but public applause can give. He grew so proud and overconfident that the next time he was called up he found himself unprepared, and after a miserable effort was obliged to sit down with intense mortification, while the class hissed him, a custom which also prevailed, although its wisdom was sometimes questioned and by some of the teachers was absolutely forbidden.

The lesson was not lost on Paul. He set to work to do what lay in his power to make his scholarship a steadily increasing, daily possession, not relying so much on brilliant spurts or inspirations as upon solid application, and he found the result more satisfactory.

It was after he had been in the school two months that Paul sent home the following letter. He wrote regularly every week.

"I have just been elected by my class one of the ten speakers to contest for the Harvard Prize given for the best original declamation on 'The Place of Athletics in School Life.' It's a good subject and I believe I can write something on it. The speaking comes off in the big hall the last night of the term; that will be three weeks from next Friday. There are five Mid-dlers and five Seniors selected for this contest, and the prize is twenty-five dollars. The winner is clapped by the whole school when he comes into chapel next morning and the entire school, teachers and all, rise. It's a big thing, I tell you, and like as not a supper in the school dining room and toasts and class songs. The Seniors feel mighty big this year because they got the Greek Prize away from us Middlers. If we can only beat them on the Harvard we shall get even.

Those socks and mittens mother sent me are beautiful. It is very cold here this winter, and I have had to get up pretty early every morning and kindle the furnace fire. I don't mind milking the cow, and I thought I would have some fun driving the horse, but he is so slow and sleepy that when I have been

out with him to take Miss Rea down to the village I was afraid the wagon would run over him. You know I have told you about my liking them. They are just as good to me as they can be. Whenever I get a little cold, or stub my toe playing ball, Miss Rea makes the greatest fuss and wants to doctor me up with all sorts of medicines. I don't say anything, but when she goes out of the room I empty the bottles into the fireplace. Really, mother, you must not think I am bad, but if I took all that stuff it would lay me up for a week.

I sprained my ankle a week ago playing football. The snow melted off the campus and we went out for a little practice. I hadn't any suit and one of the boys tore my jacket down the back so that I had to sit up two hours in the evening and mend it. My ankle is all right now. Don't get worried about me, will you? I don't think it is half so dangerous to play football as to work on a farm, digging wells and hitching balky mules.

I hope you are getting on all right. Sometimes I feel ashamed to be having such good times while David and Ruth are slaving on the farm. Some time I hope to be able to provide for you all. If I get the Harvard Prize I want it to go towards the interest that is due next month. Give my love to all the live stock, especially my favorite mulley cow who always puts her foot in it at the close.

Lovingly yours of Veronda,
Paul Sidney."

As the term drew near for the prize contest, Paul

grew more and more eager to win it. A letter from David since his own was written, had, without David's intending it, led Paul to believe that times at home on the farm were very hard and money very scarce. Twenty-five dollars would be a great help to them. Paul found himself growing covetous. He had written a strong essay and practiced speaking it every afternoon. His delivery was not very good, but he had a great amount of dogged perseverance and improved slowly. He trusted to the merits of his piece from a literary standard to win.

When the night of the contest arrived he took his seat with the other contestants on the front row in the great hall, and with a beating heart waited for his turn. He was seventh on the list of speakers. He did not follow the speakers very closely. His mind was too much occupied in running over the opening sentences of his own piece. At last number six finished and walked off. Paul heard the applause, saw the speaker walk off the platform, and the class president arise to announce the next contestant. He heard his own name, "Paul Sidney of the Middle Class, Classical!"

He rose and walked up the platform steps, made his bow to the president and advanced to speak. The hall was packed to the windows and doors, the big school was present to a boy, and everything was as still as stony death itself.

CHAPTER III.

A TREACHEROUS MEMORY.

If there can be anything quieter than death, the audience that Paul faced as he continued to stand there without uttering a word seemed stiller than the last great enemy of mankind. When Paul entered the hall that night he had been nervous but quite confident. As he had listened to the six speakers who preceded him, this confidence had grown, al-tliough he was not able to check the nervous throbbing of his heart. As he heard his name called and walked up the platform steps he felt as if the prize were his already. But as he bowed to the president and turned and faced the great audience, the thought that he was the one object of attention from that critical mob of boys whirled through his brain. At the same second the farm at home seemed to come up into view and he could see David wearily coming in from the work at the stables, and his mother feebly though cheerfully asking how the day had gone, while Ruth, tired and discouraged at David's dejection, went about getting the frugal supper, and Carl sat in one corner trying to read some English newspaper.

All this was a lightning train of thought; then in an instant Paul was painfully conscious of the great audience, and the next thing he knew he was facing all those people and had forgotten every word of his declamation ! It was as clean gone as if some one had wiped every word of it clear out of his mind. He had

not brought the written declamation to the hall with him. It had not once occurred to him that he could forget, so no arrangement had been made for his being prompted. It seemed to him that he stood there an hour. In reality it was only a few seconds. The audience was painfully still. With every second it became more and more embarrassing. Paul could stand it no longer. He turned and walked rapidly off the stage, and hardly knowing what he did, rushed out of the hall through one of the doors near the stage entrance and ran out on the campus, every sensitive fiber in him stung and quivering with what seemed to him to be the greatest possible disgrace. He didn't know how the audience had acted. He didn't care. The one great thought with him was to get away from the place. He almost wished he were dead. The idea that he, Paul Sidney, couldn't remember his own composition! He could see the school the next morning when he came into chapel. How every boy would laugh and poke fun! And then he had lost the twenty-five dollars! And the family at home was needing the money so! For the first time in his life Paul thought of suicide.

He suddenly found himself at the end of the campus, which was bordered by a double row of great elms. In the darkness he had not noticed where he was. But gradually more sensible feelings prevailed. He began to call himself a fool, and when Paul did that it was a pretty good sign that he was beginning to get wiser. He looked up at the hall windows aglow with the light and heard the noise of clapping hands as the audience applauded some point made by the

speaker. He determined to go to his room. He did not feel like waiting to hear about the way the prize went. So he went back to the Colemans, let himself in with his key (the Misses Coleman had gone to the school), and going up to his room threw himself down on his bed and in the darkness shed some very bitter tears. He was almost minded to pack up his things next day and leave. He would go home and buckle down to hard work with David. If he couldn't do anything else he could lift and pull with his muscles. If his brain was cracked, his body seemed to be all right. He wondered how his memory could have played him false in that manner. It had never done so before. He never could face the school next morning. As he lay there, he went over the whole wretched affair until he heard the ladies coming in. They had evidently guessed that Paul had come into the house, for Miss Rea came upstairs and knocking gently at the door called out, "Paul, are you ill? "

"No ma'am," replied Paul, feeling just the least bit cross and showing it in his tone.

There seemed to be a moment of hesitation on the part of Miss Rea, then she said "Good night, Paul," and went downstairs.

Paul was a little ashamed and almost minded to ask who had won the prize, but he didn't, and passed the night in more or less wakefulness. In the morning he went down to breakfast, feeling savage enough to want to break something, as David used to say, either a piece of furniture or one of the ten commandments ; it didn't make much difference just then which.

The ladies expressed their sympathy for his failure and tried to cheer him up. It was good news to him to learn that one of the Middlers had won the prize. When he went into chapel he was surprised at the little attention paid him. It was one of the lessons Paul learned out of many while in the big school that did him a world of good. He was taught by the comparative unimportance attached to his failure that he was not the greatest person in the academy and that all the students were not thinking about him all the time.

The incident of his failure was ignored indeed by the boys largely out of a genuine desire not to hurt his feelings. But the school life was so filled with exciting and important events that no one occurrence long remained prominent.

Paul drew a long breath at the close of the day as he summed up his experience. He was alive: the professors had treated him kindly, the class had not snubbed him, and altogether he felt better than he had thought possible. Nevertheless he could not overcome his disappointment; he did so want to earn money to help the dear ones at home. A letter from his mother about this time did him a world of good, and as it was written before news of Paul's failure had time to reach home, it did all the more to strengthen the boy's inward resolve that he would make the home folks proud of him in time. The letter told of another severe storm which had swept over the northwest and then went on, David and Carl had all they could do to fodder the cattle this time. The snow buried the haystacks very deep. The boys

worked fully three hours every morning digging out enough hay to last through the day.

One of the cows, (not your favorite mulley cow), had strayed off the day before the storm came up and yesterday David found her body down in the Chalkstone ravine, just her head and shoulders sticking out of a huge drift. She was frozen stiff. David felt very badly about it, but I do not see how he could help it. He is one of the best boys a mother ever had, and my only anxiety is lest he should break down. He is always lifting and doing two men's work. Carl is a great help to him and to us all. We could not get along without him. He is fast learning to talk good English, and during the evenings Ruth has taught him to read and write.

We are quite an interesting group here in the evening. Carl gets out the dictionary and the Bible, and Ruth makes him read aloud while he writes down on a piece of paper all the new words he comes across, and the next night has a sort of review of the list. He is not shy about talking now except to strangers and takes his turn reading two verses during prayers at night. I am sure he will grow up into a good useful Christian man.

We are all glad you are so contented at the Colemans. I felt quite sure you would be. When your letter came telling about the prize speaking David said, I don't believe Paul can get that prize. He is too confident. Besides, he needs a great deal of practice in public delivery. If it was on the composition, he might stand a chance.' I tell you this, Paul, so that in case you should fail to get the prize you might know that we

had not set our hearts on it so completely as to feel badly except out of sympathy for you. You should remember that it is a good deal to expect to excel nine other boys, five of whom have had at least a year's experience in advance of you. Your mother wants you to understand this in any case.

In any contest of this kind you ought not to define success to mean winning the first place and getting the money. It is worth a good deal to a boy sometimes to be defeated, especially if he is one of the proud, self-satisfied kind of boys. Now your mother does not think you are that kind of a boy always, but she wants to say for your good that in case you should fail you must not be discouraged, and think you don't know anything and all that. Never feel disgraced, my son, unless you do something dishonorable. It is not dishonorable to be defeated in a contest where you have put the best you are capable of doing against other men. The world's best men have known what it is to fail in that way. I want my boys to grow up with a larger, better thought of success than most people give it. And whether you win the money or not I want you to feel that all at home are full of love for you, and confidence in you, and nothing will hurt our feelings except the thought that you have done something unworthy a Sidney. So, Paul, if you fail to get the prize and feel badly, take this letter out and read it, and always remember that we have faith in you and are praying lovingly for you. We want you to know the best of everything, but we don't want you to feel the burden and lack of means too heavily. The Lord

has always provided for us and I know he always will. As long as you keep strong and healthy it is a great blessing.

I don't object to your playing football, but I want you to play like a Christian gentleman. If you can't do it you must stop right off. For you know I have always told you that life is all of one piece and everything we do, whether we eat or drink, work or play, is to be done to the glory of God. If you can't play football to the glory of God I don't want you to play. Your poor old mother, Paul, lies here on her back all day long thinking about life as Christ meant it and lived it, and she is more and more persuaded that whenever a human being gets the right idea of everyday life he thinks of it as a thing all bound up with God. And the body is just as much a part of the whole scheme as what we call the soul, and the brain is only one part of all the rest, and so Christ was quite right when he told us to love God with all our might and with every part of us. If I pray one prayer oftener than any other it is the prayer that my children may prove to the world that this kind of a life is not only practicable but that it is the only life worth anything.

You cannot say to yourself, Paul, 'There is my body, that is mine to enjoy as I please without reference to God. There is my mind, it is all my own to be ambitious with and make money, and God has little to do with it. And there is my soul, that belongs to God, and he may have what it amounts to.' Nobody ever succeeded in cutting himself into three pieces like that. Plenty of men try to do it, though, and that is one reason why there is so much trouble in the

world to day, selfishness and restlessness and lying and hypocrisy and shame, superficial ideas of existence. I want my boys to be all for God and all for man - the Fatherhood above them and the brotherhood around them. Life is not worth having without obedience to these two laws. You will understand this better as you grow older. Great events are happening in this old world and greater are to follow. This frail tenement that holds my soul is wearing out, and before the Father calls me to himself, I want to see you, Paul, a big stout-hearted man, ready to help fight for every worthy object because you understand what the meaning of life really is. I don't fear for you if you once get the right definition of things and then live by them.

Don't forget to pray. I am glad you never felt ashamed of it. Pray that we may all be led in our family needs. We all remember you in our evening circle at the Bible reading. At the last communion I spoke to David about uniting with the church in town. He does not like the minister and gave that as an excuse for not wishing to join. Ever since Ruth united three years ago I have prayed that you and David might come into the church. You know how glad that would make your mother. When the time comes I hope you will not refuse to confess Christ in this particular way before men.

I have preached quite a sermon, haven't I ? It has all come out of my heart. I sometimes think that the Father will call me suddenly and I want to feel that I have said to my dear boys what I so often think as I lie here apparently useless and a burden to you. But

I know the goodness of God is unchangeable. He will allow me to see a part of my great desire granted. That desire is that my three children may know the joy of living to the glory of Almighty God.

David is getting ready to go down town this morning and so I will send this to mail by him. We all send love in great abundance and hope and pray great blessings for you.

Lovingly,
Mother."

Some parts of this letter made Paul cry, and all of it made him think. He felt ashamed of his ill temper and of his narrow ideas, and in his impetuous fashion determined to show his mother that he loved her fully. This determination was more than a New Year's resolution with him. It went to the bottom of things in the boy and stayed by him as long as he lived. That pain-smitten invalid in the lonely prairie log house was exerting an influence over three independent natures that all the rest of the world could not equal. Truly God can use apparently useless instruments to do his mighty will and work in his kingdom on earth.

With the spring term at Veronda came the great athletic contests lasting three days. These contests were annual events looked forward to with eagerness and discussed with enthusiasm. Paul had entered his name for the bicycle race. It happened in this way: One of his classmates, the boy who had carried off the prize at the declamation contest, was taken ill the last part of the winter recess. He owned a bicycle,

one of the later patterns, and had expected to enter his name for the race. His illness necessitated his going home, and hearing in some way that Paul had expressed a great longing to try for the place, he sent for him to come up to his room and very generously offered to let him take his wheel and practice on it. Paul was delighted at the chance but hesitated.

"I don't quite like to do it, Richards; I might break it for you."

"No more than I would myself," growled Richards, who was having a very hard time of it with inflammatory rheumatism. "Tell you what I 've always thought, Sidney. If you hadn't forgot your piece at the Harvard you would have won that twenty-five dollars instead of me. I 'd like to have you take the wheel. I can't use it for two months anyway, and I 'll risk it with you."

"It 's very good of you and I won't forget it," said Paul.

He took the wheel back with him and as soon as the weather would allow began to practice. He was intensely fond of outdoor sports, and took to all the school games with a heartiness and skill that surprised even the older boys. He had already won a place on the baseball nine and was looked upon as a sure and safe player.

The entries for the wheel race were seven in all. The course was the public road from Veronda to Milton, a town three miles distant, and back again. The contestants were all to start from the academy building together. They were then allowed to choose their own route to Milton, the object being to make

the time as rapidly as possible. Every contestant was obliged by the rules to run his wheel around the square, in the center of which stood the town hall of Milton and then get back to the academy as quickly as he could, choosing the route he pleased.

There were two wagon roads leading to Milton, the one following the railroad track being less hilly but in some places very sandy and hard wheeling, the other being good hard road for the most part but going over three or four hills, one of them quite steep. By the rules of the race the wheelmen were not allowed to dismount from start to finish. Any one doing so was disqualified and shut out from the distribution of prizes, which were two silver medals for first and second winner respectively. Paul in his practice spins which he usually took early in the morning had tried both roads to Milton, and after due deliberation chose the hill road, believing he could make better time there than on the railroad route.

The seven contestants started together at the word, and a great shout went up from the assembled school as the seven wheels spun down the academy hill. They kept well together in the broad road but gradually scattered as they reached the bottom of the slope and neared the fork where the different routes to Milton branched off.

Only two boys besides Paul took the hill road. The other four ran down by the railroad track and rapidly pushed along on the level stretch, keeping well together.

Paul had lain his plans for the race with great care. He was determined in this instance to do his class

honor, and if possible cover up the shame he still felt over his failure at the speaking. In a bicycle race the great things needed are good lung power and a certain well defined knack of using muscle so that every ounce of it goes into the wheel, not a particle being wasted in awkward or useless body movements. Paul was very vigorous and supple, had a splendid muscular development for a boy of his age and had practiced faithfully.

He was afraid of only one of the other six contestants. He was a Senior, one of the few disagreeable fellows in the academy, one of the very few, who, the morning after Paul's lapse of memory, had said something sneeringly about Paul's declamation being so extra good that he had concluded after due deliberation not to give it away. Paul almost hated Wilber, and in this contest he feared him. Wilber rode one of the best wheels made, and had been successful in local contests with the other boys. He was one of the two on this occasion who chose the hill road with Paul. For the first mile the three kept well together. Then Wilber increased his speed and drew away from Paul and the other boy until he was perhaps an eighth of a mile ahead. Paul made no effort to catch up. He had found out that his best chance lay in husbanding his strength for the final effort. He calculated that by running his wheel at a steady pace to Milton he could easily increase his speed on the return trip. He preferred to do his best work coming back. A half mile from Milton Paul passed the other boy and lessened the distance between Wilber and himself, so that when they

entered the town the two were not thirty yards apart. The town hall stood in the very center of a square surrounded by stores and intersected at diagonals by two cross roads which were used as driveways. The boys had always been put upon their honor to race fairly. Some years judges had been stationed at the square to see that the rule concerning running around it was obeyed. This year, for various reasons, no one was there. Several boys were in the street about the town hall with their wheels. The academy boys were in the habit of running over to Milton, so as Wilber went by no one paid any special attention. Just ahead of him was a Milton boy on a wheel whose costume was almost the same as his.

Paul had come up to the corner of the square just as Wilber wheeled rapidly down past the hall and then he saw him turn down one of the diagonal roads and push his wheel like mad across the square until the town hall hid him from view, thus cutting off at least half a block of the route and cheating to get ahead. Paul looked behind. None of the contestants was in sight. For a second he was tempted to follow Wilber. But only for a second. Then he remembered his mothers letter. The words "I do not want you to play football unless you can do it to the glory of God" flashed upon him. And of course it was all the same in a bicycle race. If he couldn't run that to the glory of God and win he had better be beaten. He whirled past the entrance to the diagonal road and glided past the boy, dressed like Wilber, who was circling about the square. Paul had a dim idea, that Wilber might have thought that if any of the other academy

riders were in sight they would confuse this boy with himself in some way and not notice his cut across the square. It was a very stupid thing if he had, but then Paul reflected that mean men are more apt to do stupid things than honest ones. He began to push his wheel now, for the first time putting out some of his reserve strength. He had gained his second wind and with the grit and dog-gedness of a very stubborn nature when fully roused he was determined that if muscle and endurance could get him to Veronda ahead of Wilber in spite of the cheating he would do it. He determined to take the hill road back and as he came to the top of the hill leading out of Milton he could see Wilber slowly climbing the next hill, evidently somewhat winded by his spurt through the town which he had planned purposely to get through the square before any one saw him.

Paul whirled down the hill with a rapidity that carried him a good ways on up the next slope and then began to climb after Wilber with all his might. That individual looked back and seeing the energy and tirelessness of the rider behind him, braced himself for a hard struggle. Going down the second hill he gained on Paul but Paul shortened the distance considerably on the upward push. Then as the last mile was entered Paul gradually drew up so that as they crossed the little bridge by the railroad track not fifteen feet separated the two riders, who had distanced all the rest. Paul was near enough now to see that Wilber was somewhat exhausted and putting out his last strength. As they came off the bridge and turned to go up Academy Hill they passed

by a pile of stove wood which one of the farmers had stacked by his fence. Paul saw Wilber, as he wheeled by, snatch a round stick from the pile, and as Paul drew up, gaining on his rival, the latter threw the stick down in front of Paul's wheel saying, " Better stick to speaking ; that's your forte !"

There was not another boy in the school mean enough to do such a thing. But a boy that would cheat would do even more. Paul could not by any possibility avoid the obstacle. He ran full speed upon the stick, which fortunately was round, and not very large, so that as the front wheel struck it it rolled over and whirled around in such a way that the hind wheel just missed it. For a second Paul thought he was going to fall. The shock was so severe that he reeled, and with the greatest difficulty kept himself from going over. He had no time to think if the wheel was broken. A great wave of indignation swept over him and he clinched his fingers about the handle bars and ground his teeth together as he recovered from the shock and darted after Wilber, who had gained several yards. By the time Paul had caught up with him they had come out together at the foot of Academy Hill. Several boys on their wheels were stationed here to meet the contestants and cheer them on to the finish.

A great shout went up as Paul and Wilber came on side by side. The slope of the hill was not great but coming at the close of the race was a severe test of muscle and wind. Wilber was panting and laboring, evidently in much distress but holding on doggedly now, beginning to dread the rider who had pushed

him harder than any one he had ever known in the school before. The race began to rouse the two classes. The Middlers ranged in a crowd on one sidewalk and the Seniors on the other. There was a perfect tempest of class yells and on all sides shouts of "A Sidney!" "A Sidney!" One hundred yards yet to drive over before the winner drew up in front of the academy building steps, the starting place. Paul knew that on those steps the master stood by the side of the judges. At the thought of it he put out his reserve strength, and shot up the slope, passing Wilber so swiftly that the latter seemed to be standing still. Easily, without any show of fatigue, and with a smile of triumph, Paul whirled past the steps, winner by fully forty yards.

Then no one was prouder than our Paul. The Middlers hardly waited for him to dismount. They snatched him up and carried him up the path to the hall, and the master shook him by the hand heartily and said he did n't think he could beat it himself. The school cheered, and a stranger would have thought some great battle had been fought and won, to say the least. Then the other riders began to come in. A boy in Paul's class finished third. His name was Thompson and he would have come in sooner but broke a treadle on the way back.

Wheu the time came to award the medals Paul was considerably perplexed to know what to do. He knew that Wilber had won the second place unfairly, and that by right it belonged to Thompson, who had finished third. But he did not know just what was his duty in the matter. He had the horror that most

school boys have of telling on another. Yet in this instance if Wilber took the medal it would be an injustice to Thompson. Wouldn't it be any boy's honest duty to inform the judges of the cheating? If he had been beaten by Wilber everybody might think Paul was influenced by jealousy or revenge if he told about the cheating. As it was, he would simply speak for justice to be done. When his medal had been pinned upon his coat Paul had made up his mind. The judge announced "Second medal to Cephas Wilber of the Senior class," when Paul stepped up and said, " I want to say a word about the awarding of this medal. It belongs to Thompson, not to Wilber."

Wilber turned red, then pale, and made a movement as if to strike Paul. Several boys interfered. Paul spoke, growing a little excited as he pointed at Wilber.

" I saw him cut across the square at Milton. He gained half a block by cheating."

There was a chorus of hisses, and cries of " Shame! shame!" For a minute Paul did not know whether the hisses were for him because he had told or for Wilber because he had cheated. Then one of the judges said seriously, "Can you prove your statement, Sidney?" Paul colored. " I saw him do it. That's all the proof I can bring; unless some one else in Milton saw it."

" Did any other rider see Wilber cheat? " asked the judge.

None of them had. Wilber smiled disagreeably. Paul stood his ground and looked Wilber square in the face as he said, " You did cut across the square,

didn't you ? "

Wilber savagely replied, while his lips trembled with the falsehood, "I did not, you miserable little liar!"

Paul turned on his heel with a feeling of disgust. "I have done my duty. Wilber cheated and I 'm sorry no one else saw him. I had no object in telling except to do justice to Thompson, who by right ought to have the second place. It all rests between Wilber's word and mine."

Paul got away from the crowd, mounted his wheel and rode off to his room without waiting to hear the decision of the judges. They, after consultation, finding that no one else could be found to corroborate Paul's testimony bestowed the medal on Wilber, who sullenly walked off with it muttering threats against Paul. He might perhaps have carried out some of his threats and made things very disagreeable if a report had not begun to spread through the school in a few days that other parties in Milton had seen the cheating, and that Paul had spoken truth in the matter. Affairs began to grow so warm for Wilber that before the spring term was over he decided it would be best for his health to go home. When he finally departed, Paul drew a breath of satisfaction, feeling that the school had come to the conclusion that Wilber had cheated and Paul had done right in telling.

There was a small crowd of boys who still insisted upon it that Paul had done a mean sneaking thing, but most of them saw his motive and believed that he had done just right. The master, who had got wind of the whole affair, threw the weight of his influence on

Paul's side. "There are times," he told the school one morning, "when to keep silent is to shield the criminal and encourage injustice. No one despises the talebearer, the mean, sneaking, toadying boy more than I do. But whenever any boy in the school knows of any wrong being done that will harm the character or morals of the school as a whole, I consider that boy is simply doing his duty when he tells me or some other teacher about it. Ten years ago a group of young boys brought a lot of impure books into the school and began to circulate them. Before I found it out, infinite harm had been done. Yet I discovered afterwards that some of my best boys had known the facts but had not told me about them on account of that old feeling about telling on another boy in school. I hope you are learning the difference between telling tales and protecting the school family from dishonor. The same laws ought to hold good in a big school which govern a big family. Any sensible lad here knows the difference between telling tales on some other lad who has plagued him, perhaps, and informing the school of things that are injurious to its life. No boy need turn spy. That is contemptible. But if a knowledge comes to any one of you of that which you know is destructive to morality as loyal students and lovers of the institution it may sometimes be your duty to inform me. I consider Mr. Sidney's action justified by the facts as they have lately come to light."

Paul felt a great burden rolled off when the master spoke thus in commendation before them all. He was glad to find that his instinct in the matter had been

right as judged by one of the best educators in America. He wrote home a glowing account of the case, and tried to draw a picture of the medal, which looked about as much like it as a sunflower looks like a pumpkin pie. But the folks at home were not critical, and they rejoiced with him in his success. Paul did not say a word to any one about the attempt made by Wilber to obstruct the bicycle during the race. He told it years afterwards in relating the event but no one at the time knew anything about it.

The spring term found Paul well advanced in his studies at Veronda. His love for the school grew with every day in it. When the term closed he found himself asking what he could do during the summer. He could not afford to go home, although he was homesick to see the mother and Ruth and David. There was nothing to do in Veronda. He was sitting out on the academy steps talking over plans with a group of boys who like himself had been working their way through when one of them proposed trying to get positions as waiters in one of the Green Mountain hotels for the summer.

"I tried that one year," said one of the older boys. "And I had just a nickel and a one cent stamp left when I got back to school."

"Good for you!" said another boy. "That beats me. I went down to Narragansett Pier and worked in a hotel there, and when I finished the season I owed the head waiter three dollars and a half."

"Well, anyway," replied the first speaker, "we had lots of fun, saw all the fashions, had good board, and I for

one would like to go again."

"Is the work hard ?" asked Paul, who disliked the term "waiter" and thought he could not earn anything in that way.

" Why, no, the work isn't hard after you get used to it. Have to stand on your feet all day. But it's good to keep your trousers from bagging at the knees. And if you get in with the cook there 's no end of pie and ice cream and " —

"But what pay do you get?" interrupted Paul.

"Twelve dollars a month and board and lodging and all the perquisites you can pick up."

" Perquisites ? "

" Yes, fees. Like as not you'll have some high-toned people from Boston and Philadelphia at your table, and they will leave a ten dollar bill for you at the close of every meal."

The speaker winked at the crowd comprehensively. This group of boys represented the poor students in Veronda. They were a good-natured group, struggling to make their way by any honest means. They were not ashamed of their poverty and in fact managed to get much fun out of it as they went along. They discussed the waiter plan at length and finally decided to make application to one of the big hotels in the mountains. The boy who had been there before wrote the head waiter and in a few days received a favorable reply. He could take a dozen active wideawake fellows for the summer. Paul decided to go, and sent on his name for a place. There were nine students in all who either lived too

far from Veronda to go home or who wished to spend the summer where they could be free from debt. So Paul wrote home in as jolly a mood as possible, although he was really getting homesick.

„I am going to spend the summer at one of the fashionable mountain resorts. I have packed my Saratoga and expect to start tomorrow. It will be one whirl of gayety and amusement from now on. We shall be on the most intimate terms with the best society people, and we expect to acquire a degree of polish and select manners that will last us a lifetime. My wardrobe is not quite so extensive as I would wish, but dress suits are kindly furnished by the hotel proprietor. Direct all communications to

Paul Sidney, F.R.X.Y.Z.

Sky High House, White Mts.

The next day Paul started with the rest of the boys. He was not in the best of spirits. He had an undefinable dread that things were not going well at home. The last letter he had received had been from Ruth, and he thought it sober in the extreme. He almost knew that something was wrong on the farm. If the mother were growing feebler they would certainly let him know. What he feared most was the burden of debt on the farm, and he choked as he thought of David doing the work of two men in his heroic endeavors to pay the interest. Part of the principal would be due in the fall, and Paul could not see how it could be met. He thought it all over as the

train whirled him northward. The next morning when he found himself on the station platform at Fairview in the very heart of the mountains he was still thinking of home, the mother, Ruth and David. It was the very evening of the day that Paul left Veronda that David surprised his mother by revealing a secret which he had long kept to himself and had no intention of letting any one know, least of all, his mother. He came in from the day's work very tired, but, as usual, said little. The day had been an exasperating one to him. The cattle had broken down a long piece of pasture fence and two of them had cut themselves dangerously on the wire. The spring had come on rapidly, and the grass outside the big pasture always seemed more tempting to the cattle than that within.

" If we fenced in the whole state I believe they would want to get over into the next one," remarked David that evening.

His patience was almost gone. He was very quiet after the Bible reading, and when he finally went off to his room the mother lay awake longer than usual praying for her oldest boy. In about an hour she fell asleep. At the end of that time she awoke uneasily, hearing a voice in David's room. She could not help hearing. The door was slightly ajar, the partition was very thin, and David was talking very loud. The mother remembered that when a small boy David had been in the habit of talking in his sleep. He had not done it for several years now. But suddenly the old habit had returned, and the mother's heart went out in anguish for her firstborn son as she heard

what she could not but believe was the expression of the boy's waking thoughts. The tears coursed down her thin pale face as she lifted her feeble hands in the darkness and called to God to help her dear ones for Jesus' sake.

CHAPTER IV.

A SECRET BETRAYED.

As has been said, David was talking very loud, and his mother could not help hearing. He was evidently going over his experience of the day with the cattle and the broken pasture fence.

"Look out, Carl! There goes the big white steer! Be careful now. Well, this is a bad break! I'm sick of this. Three years now I've been wanting to go to college, and here I am slaving on this old farm. I wouldn't have mother know it for the world. Couldn't both of us go. Paul is having a good time. And some one must take care of mother and Ruth. And I'm getting too old to go now. It's awful to be poor. Hi there! Head 'em off, Carl! That's right. Now we've got'em. Aren't they the biggest fools you ever saw to go and cut themselves that way! Yes, I'm too old to go to college now. Might as well be a farmer all my life. It's a dog's life, though."

At this point David began to mutter in a low tone something his mother could not hear. But she had heard enough. With all her mother love she had not suspected anything of this in David. He had always been a very undemonstrative boy; talked very little;

worked hard; never had any boy friends to speak of; lived much within himself, and seemed in a certain way perfectly contented with the farm life. The revelation made in his sleep was, the mother believed, a sure indication of the inward feelings of his mind. She lay awake nearly all night, and poured out her heart in prayer for him. Should she let the boy know what she had heard? or talk with him about his evident longing for college life? She did not answer these questions until the next evening when, as it chanced, David and his mother were alone for an hour. Ruth had been invited (a rare occurrence) to the nearest farmer's to a little gathering, and Carl had gone with her.

David was reading aloud to the mother from one of the bound volumes of the Century which the father had taken when the boys were small. They had lately begun to get interested in some things they had found in these volumes. David had volunteered to read a continued story which ran through one of the volumes. It was what is generally called a love story, and David had sniffed two or three times during the reading at certain sentimental passages. All of a sudden he stopped short and looked over to his mother with a whimsical look.

"Now, mother, don't you think that's awfully unnatural? Of course if this fellow was really in love with the girl he couldn't keep it so secret from the other one!"

"Well, I don't know about that. Some people can keep secrets surprisingly even from their dearest friends."

"Yes, but not that kind of a secret. Why, every word and gesture would betray it."

"What do you know about it, David?" inquired his mother a little mischievously. "You have not had much experience, have you? "

"I should hope not," replied David, with a look of disgust. " I 'm not one of the sentimental sort. Besides, I 've got my hands full with this farm. When I fall in love, especially with a girl like this one in the story, I want you to send me to the insane asylum; the incurable department. I'm going to be an old bachelor and spend my days taking care of you, mommee."

Mrs. Sidney looked over at her boy lovingly. He spoke very deliberately. There was not a trace of regret or uneasiness in his tone. She began to wonder if she had not dreamed of hearing him talk in his sleep. David turned to the magazine to read again. Suddenly his mother asked,

"Do you have any secret from your mother, David?" David flushed and answered promptly, "Nothing that I think I ought to tell you, mother."

"That is, you are keeping something from me now? Is that it? "

David moved uneasily. "Why, mother, I am sure I am not keeping secret anything you ought to know."

"But you are really sick of the farm and would like to go to college. And for three years you have had this longing and kept us all ignorant of it so that Paul could go," said his mother, quietly.

David said nothing for a minute. Then in a low voice, " How did you guess, mother ? I did not mean ever to

have you know."

"You talked in your sleep last night and told the whole story. O my son, my son, your mother's heart aches for you!" The invalid stretched her hands out towards the boy, while the tears she tried to crowd back would come in spite of her.

David could bear almost anything but that. He rose and coming up to the bed kneeled down by it and put his face against his mother's, and held her two hands in his own great brown sinewy palm.

For some little time nothing was said. Finally David spoke.

"I don't mind it so very much now, mother. It's only when things go crooked that I get blue and restless. You know I never lied. And it is true I have wanted to go to school. I am glad I speak the truth even in my sleep. But I didn't want you to know."

"It's very hard!" sighed Mrs. Sidney. "There are times when I wonder what use the Lord has for such a burden as I am. If I was only out of the way" —

"Mother!" David interrupted her with a feeling and a look of pain.

"O David! of course I do not doubt the Father's goodness or wisdom. But I do want to see you happy."

"Why, mother, I am happy — happy in caring for you. I am a great big fool to go around secretly wishing for something I can not have when I am so blessed with this great strong body and with such a mother as you are. And if you ever say another word about being a burden" — David looked the rest, and the mother smiled through her tears as she felt that

whatever else was true of David his real loyalty to her was as firm and unshaken as ever.

"After all, David, it isn't too late now for you to think of college."

"I'm over twenty, and getting old very fast," remarked David with a smile.

"But very many men enter college after they're twenty. I believe the Lord will open a way for you yet."

"But you understand, don't you, mother? that I don't mean to go around secretly unhappy about it any more."

"Yes, I will not dwell upon it, my son."

They had a little more talk together, one of those rare conferences which occurred between David and his mother about once a year and both felt better for it. When Ruth and Carl returned, they found David quietly reading as when they left him and they did not suspect that anything had happened.

All through the spring and summer David and Carl worked like giants on the farm. By the closest economy and good management they succeeded in paying the interest on the mortgage, but two hundred dollars of the principal fell due in December and David looked forward to the time of payment with a feeling of dread. He feared the crops would not turn out well enough or that prices would be so low that even good crops would bring but a small return. He watched every cloud with jealous interest. He was fearful of hailstorms and cyclones. Beside the stock to care for, he and Carl had put in seventy-five acres of corn and one hundred acres of wheat. The season

was favorable. Beautiful rains fell at just the right time. The corn grew so, that, as David said, you could hear the leaves snap as they unrolled from their wet, sap-moistened cornucopias. The prospect for the biggest yield of wheat ever known gladdened the hearts of the farmers in all the region about. Hope is a hard thing to crush out of the human breast, and as David looked out from the door of the log house on his fast ripening fields he took courage and began to think that after all he might meet that two hundred dollar note the first of December and have a little over. If wheat brought seventy-five cents a bushel and corn forty-five he believed he could do it.

The wheat waved in golden billows and stood as thick as it could well stand, while the heads were long and well filled. It would amount to at least twenty bushels to the acre. That would mean two thousand bushels, or, allowing for waste and possible loss, eighteen hundred bushels, which at seventy cents would be \$1350. Counting his labor and that of Carl, and the expenses of threshing and harvesting and marketing at \$350 at the outside would leave him \$1000. And reducing this sum to one half, even, would still leave him more than twice enough to pay the note. So David went about reckoning his wealth, which still waved its richness in the air, and the mother's heart was glad as she heard him whistle when he started out in the morning or came into the house at night. Evidently he was not brooding over his longing to go to college but had given his whole thought to the farm and was

bending every energy to wipe out the dreaded mortgage.

One very hot day he and Carl had been at work on a pond at the lower end of the big pasture. They were trying to build a dam across one of the sloughs, so as to confine a larger quantity of water for the cattle. Some springs in the mounds near by trickled down into the gully but not enough water was collected in any one place to satisfy the cattle.

It was about four o'clock when David, who was up to his knees in mud and water, looked up and saw a great black cloud which had, it seemed to him, suddenly appeared in the southwest. He called Carl's attention to it and said, "I don't like the looks of it."

"Why? what is the matter?" inquired Carl, curiously.
" See the greenish yellow tinge in the under part of the cloud and how the front of it curls over. There is going to be trouble there."

David got out of the pond and at once started for the house. By the time he and Carl reached it things looked very serious in the southwest. The boys closed all the shed doors and then rushed into the house and shut down all the windows just as the first big drops of a heavy shower spattered on the panes. David anxiously watched for hailstones. At first, to his great relief, there were none. The great cloud now curled its advancing crest in a most threatening manner and the air rapidly grew lieavy and dark. Over on the next quarter section stood a grove of cottonwood trees. The first intimation David had of the approach of a real cyclone was its effect on

these trees. What seemed like a great twisting tail of the cloud suddenly dropped down into the cottonwood grove and the anxious watchers in the Sidney farm house saw the tops of the trees tossed violently about and then torn into shreds as the whirling cloud started on its destructive travels. Still there was no hail yet and David exclaimed as he watched the storm center, "It may miss us yet if it goes past the corner of Peterson's!"

Then Ruth cried out, "What will become of us all! We shall all be killed if it comes this way! How can we save mother?"

Mrs. Sidney, looking out of one of the windows from her reclining position, could see the entire south-west. She spoke very calmly.

"Children, you had better go down cellar. It will be the only place of safety. God will take care of me."

"Mother, do you think we would leave you up here alone?" asked David, reproachfully. Before he could say another word there was a roaring around them like nothing they had ever heard before. Without a moment's warning the reservoirs above seemed to open wide their gates and rain dropped down as if a river had fallen through its channeled bed. The most vivid lightning played all through the house and terrific peals of thunder shook everything. Through it all another sound distinct from the rain and thunder made itself felt - that rushing roar like an army of heavily caparisoned horse marching over the prairie. The cyclone cloud was passing them and whether in its eccentric career it would turn one side

and strike the house they could not tell. For a few seconds they waited, breathless, about the invalid's bed, Kuth kneeling with her face buried in the clothes as she clung to her mother's hand, David and Carl standing tense and awestruck at the play of the mighty elements about them, their faces lighted up with the ghastly yellow green of the lightning. A few seconds and the danger seemed to pass by them. Yet as they drew a sigh of relief to hear that terrible roar growing fainter and farther away they dared not think of the possible damage to sheds and crops.

Then the rain began to cease a little and as David went upstairs to see if he could get a clearer look into the storm from the upper windows, there fell upon his ear a sound he dreaded more than any other. Thump, thump on the roof went the first pattering of the hail! Faster and faster it came, great pieces of ice as big as eggs and in some cases where several stones had become joined together, masses as big as a man's fist struck the ground and bounded up and beat a dismal and furious tattoo on the roof and the tin chimney. For the first time in his life David almost cursed. He groaned aloud and even when the wind increased so that the glass in the big windows downstairs began to be beaten in by the crashing hail he paid no attention to Carl's outcry or to Ruth's call to him to come down and do something. When he finally came down his face was stern and grave. All three, by the mother's directions, removed pictures and other things liable to be damaged by the rain, from the walls through which the wind was now driving the storm. For ten minutes the rain

poured down in a tempest of wind almost cyclonic in its speed and power. Then as suddenly as it had begun it ceased; it began to grow lighter again, the thunder muttered in the distance, the big mass of clouds banked away in the north and east, the sun began to show pale and white through the trailing cape which the storm streamed out behind it, and in less than an hour from the time David and Carl entered the house, the sun was out in a clear sky just going down and shedding over all the dripping prairie a flood of golden light.

David walked out to a point on the mound where the entire quarter section could be viewed. The cyclone had passed over one corner of the barnyard, tearing one of the sheds in pieces and pulling the end entirely out of another; then turning suddenly it had gone through the big pasture tearing up several rods of fence in its passage and swept across the dam David and Carl had so laboriously constructed, opening the slough again. David could see a great torrent of muddy water rushing through the hole thus made.

That was a very little thing, however, to David just now. He looked over at his hundred acre piece of wheat which that morning had waved so richly in the warm breeze. It lay a confused mass of straw like a great mat beaten down into the soft mud by the hail, as if a herd of angry buffalo had trampled over it.

David knew that it was completely ruined. His eye swept over beyond to his cornfield, and all but one little corner of it lay stripped and beaten, not a stalk left over two feet high, leaves, young growing ears,

and all, pulled off by the ruthless hail and beaten into the ground by the wind, a total ruin so far as any crop was concerned.

The sun was just dipping behind the prairie as David turned his back on the desolation and slowly walked towards the house. Darkness was upon the face of his soul as the sun went out of sight.

The summer vacation for Paul went rapidly by. He took to the hotel life from the first. There was a strange oddity to him in the life led by the waiters. The work was not laborious but required a good memory, quickness of action, and plenty of assurance. The people in the hotel were wealthy pleasure seekers from the cities, most of whom stayed through the season. He was assigned a table that seated eight people, and after a few awkward mistakes he became quite expert in bringing in orders. Once he forgot everything and loaded up out in the order room with a miscellaneous lot of eatables and went back and put them down at random at the different plates. But that did not exactly do. Then he frankly confessed he had forgotten the orders and the guests had good laugh, probably thinking for the first time in their lives what a task it might be to remember a list of twenty-five or thirty different dishes and then separate them one from another so as to give each guest what he had ordered.

This, however, was just what Paul at last succeeded in doing, and he rapidly grew to be a favorite at his table. He was quick, obliging, pleasant in his demeanor, ready to get lunches or extras for picnics

or fishing parties, and at the end of a month had established very pleasant relations between himself and his people, as he called them. One of the gentlemen, a Mr. Gordon, who registered from Boston with his wife and one boy, seemed to take a special interest in Paul, and before the season was over had struck up quite a friendship. When Mr. Gordon learned that Paul was a Sidney he looked a little surprised and his interest in the boy seemed to deepen.

It was towards the close of the vacation that Paul acquired a habit which had an influence over his whole life and produced serious consequences to several people in this story, though Paul never dreamed of such a thing at the time. He began to smoke cigarettes with the hotel clerk and the head waiter who had from the first taken a fancy to Paul. They had offered him cigarettes several times before he would smoke one. He knew very well that his mother would not approve of it. One day the clerk sneered as Paul refused to smoke and said he was afraid to try for fear he would get sick. Paul's weak point was fear of ridicule. He finally said he would smoke one cigarette just to prove to the clerk that he was not afraid of getting sick. He smoked it one evening while sitting out on the back veranda, the head waiter laughing and joking him all the while. It did not make him sick and he liked it. From that moment he found it easy to get into the habit. In his letters home he said nothing about it and for the first time in his life began to have a secret from his mother. When a boy begins to have a secret from his

mother it is a dangerous period in his life. The fall term at Veronda opened early in September. The boys were all back again, some richer and some poorer for their vacation experiences. The waiter crowd for the most part came back with a few dollars apiece. The fees had in some instances been quite generous. Somehow Paul had expected that Mr. Gordon would give him at least a ten dollar bill when the season closed, but was disappointed one morning as he went into the office to learn that he had departed the night before. He had not even bidden Paul good-by. However, the other guests had remembered him with two dollars apiece. This added to what he had saved out of his twelve dollars a month enabled Paul to return to Veronda with twenty-five dollars. He sent it all home, together with a long letter and wrote that during his last year at the academy he was going to leave the Colemans and board in commons where he could get more of the academy life. He succeeded in getting the job of sweeping out the academy building and setting broken glass in the dormitories or commons. From both these sources he could make his board. He was sorry to leave the Colemans and they were sorry to have him go, but he felt as if the change was wise and he wanted to taste of the academy life in commons, which all the boys declared was the real thing, much better than living in a private house. It was the custom for the master to give a plain talk on some practical subject at chapel on the first day of each term. Paul flushed with shame as the master on the morning of the first day of the fall term rose

and looked around on the four hundred attentive boys and said he was going to talk to them very frankly about a very common habit known as the tobacco habit. Paul was not the only boy who during that talk sat almost breathless, listening to the stream of facts and statistics which the master quietly poured forth. Never to the day of his death could Paul forget the earnest appeal which the little man with the noble head and the loving eye made to those thoughtless boys to preserve their bodies as temples of the Holy Ghost.

"I can give you," said the master, "reliable figures by the mile to show that the expenditure for tobacco is far in excess of even the annual expenditure for necessaries, books, clothing, and schools and churches. In the city of New York above seventy-five millions of cigars are annually consumed - enough cigars to build a wall from the Empire City to Albany, and the tobacco used costs more than nine millions of dollars. It has been found from the internal revenue tax paid in the fourth district of Michigan that the tobacco used in that district cost the consumers \$1,500,000 in one year - about ten times the cost of supporting the University of Michigan and the students therein for the same time. A single New Haven firm sells one hundred and twenty thousand cigarettes a month to Yale students, one million two hundred thousand a year, at an expense of about eight thousand dollars. In any southern state where the negroes compose half the population the snuff which is sold amounts yearly to more than the cost of all the farming instruments of every kind

including cotton gins, cotton presses, steam engines for farm use, and all sorts of mechanical tools. This great nation, we are told, pays annually forty millions for its religion and two hundred millions for its tobacco. The American Board, an institution of world-wide benevolence, which collects its funds from all the northern states, does not receive a fifth part as much as is expended for cigars in the single city of New York — \$5,500,000. Dr. Willard Parker said tobacco is ruinous in our schools and colleges, dwarfing body and mind. Dr. B. W. Richardson declared that the effects of this agent, often severe on those who have attained to manhood, are especially injurious to the young. In these the habit of smoking causes impairment of growth, premature manhood and physical prostration. The Emperor Louis Napoleon, learning that paralysis and insanity had increased with the growth of the tobacco revenue ordered an examination of the schools and colleges, and finding that the average standing in both scholarship and character was lower among those who used the weed than among the abstainers, issued an edict forbidding its use in all the national institutions. The investigation of the public schools of France by medical and scientific men has been very thorough, showing the bad effects of tobacco upon the health and scholarship of the pupils.

The best scholars in Tale College abstain from the use of tobacco as they do in Oxford and Cambridge, England. Dr. Lewis, Dr. Hammond and many other eminent physicians strongly condemn the use of cigarettes as very injurious. Principal Fairbairn of

Williston Seminary, Massachusetts, says tobacco is the bane of our schools and colleges. It weakens the intellect, injures the manners and dulls the moral senses. The fact that boys learn to smoke because it is the habit of our times, does not lessen the evil of it in the least. General Grant's smoking is no good reason why the boys or the men of this country should smoke and shorten their lives many years as very likely he did. The Prince of Wales smoking in England, and thereby setting a bad example and doing a foolish thing, is no reason why the men and boys of that country should smoke. Do any of you say in reply to my argument on the ground of health, * My physician smokes,' on the ground of morals, ' My minister smokes,' on the ground of high-breeding, * My father smokes' ? Possibly. But no matter, that does not alter the facts relative to the evil in question.

And now, young men, let me say, once for all, that the tobacco habit is an evil, a terrible evil, and the reform must begin in the enlightened conscience; for a habit which destroys or enfeebles the physical powers, which affects the whole nervous system and thus reaches the will and the moral character is a sin."

The master ceased and looked around lovingly in the pause and hush of the big school and after a moment said, "Defile not the temple of the Holy Spirit."

Then he nodded and the school passed out. But these few words decided the question for Paul. He resolved then and there to give up the habit. That

very night he wrote home to his mother, and told her the whole story, giving as much of the master's talk as he could remember. When he had finished the letter he went to the drawer of his desk (he was now in a room in commons) and took out two packages of cigarettes which the clerk had given him the day he left for Veronda. Paul threw them into the stove and set fire to the accumulation of old papers there (it was not yet cold enough for a coal fire). He watched the tobacco go up in flames, and went to bed that night with a more peaceful conscience than he had known for many days. In his prayer that night he felt that he could really say, "Holy Spirit, come and dwell within me!"

How could he have said it before, when his body was soaked in the stench of that cigarette odor?

It was a month after this that Paul was getting out an exceptionally hard Greek lesson for the next day, when some one came slowly up the winding stairs of the commons building and knocked at his door. He felt vexed at the interruption and was half minded not to reply to the visitor. But after a second's hesitation he went to the door and opened it. There to his surprise stood Mr. Gordon.

"Come in!" exclaimed Paul, wondering at his visit. I'm very glad to see you."

Mr. Gordon shook hands in friendly fashion and looked about the room curiously. He accepted the seat Paul offered him and began to ask him questions about the school.

"I'm thinking of sending Frank here next year. He can enter the preparatory department. I believe you

graduate this year, don't you ? "

"Yes, sir," replied Paul, still wondering why Mr. Gordon had come. "And I 'm awful sorry to go. It's a splendid school."

"So I have heard."

Mr. Gordon then asked Paul several questions about the farm and how crops were and so on. Paul related as much as he had heard about the destructive hailstorm and Mr. Gordon seemed interested. Finally he said, "Is your brother able to pay off the mortgage on the farm if he sells all the cattle?"

"I don't know, sir," replied Paul with a choking sensation. "They are very poor. It has been a hard blow to them to lose the crops. I would have gone home at once if it had seemed best, but" —

" The reason I asked," continued Mr. Gordon as he thoughtfully crossed one leg over the other, "is because I hold the mortgage for \$1,500 and a note for \$200 that falls due December first."

Paul stared in bewilderment, not unmixed with fear, as he wondered why Mr. Gordon should come to see him about this business and he fixed his eyes upon the rich man without a word, waiting for him to go on.

CHAPTER V.

AN UNEXPECTED FRIEND.

Mr. Gordon looked at Paul steadily and continued, "Yes, I hold this mortgage, but only in trust for a third party who owing to business complications

needs the money at just this time. I have reason to believe that my agent, with whom your brother deals, has not always been reliable in giving me details correctly. Of course your brother does not know me as the holder of the mortgage on the farm, and, as I have said, I am not the owner of this particular sum; it being purely a trust fund, I acting as trustee for other parties. The whole story of this mortgage and of my connection with it is a long one and I do not need to tell it to you. But feeling insecure in regard to reliable information concerning matters on the farm I came here to see you and ask you to tell me frankly about it. I had the impression while you were at the mountains that you were an exceedingly truthful boy, and I felt impelled to come up and have a talk with you. I would have come sooner if it hadn't been for one thing."

Mr. Gordon paused hesitatingly, and Paul asked, "Well, sir, what was that?"

"Do you remember when you began to smoke cigarettes?"

Paul blushed and answered in a low tone, "Yes, sir." "Well," resumed Mr. Gordon, looking over at Paul carefully, "that set me against you, and I told my wife I didn't believe we would put ourselves out to help a family that was probably of the same style throughout, spending money uselessly for things they didn't need, and all that. It seems like a little thing to prejudice a man, but the fact is I have been so disgusted with the effects of tobacco among my own clerks, that I felt when you began using it that I did not care anything more about you. My interest in

you, my boy, was almost destroyed, and it was only because my wife urged me that I came up here today to see you."

Paul spoke up eagerly. "Mr. Gordon, I have quit using the stuff. I shall never touch it again!"

"I 'm glad to hear it. So that's past history, eh?"

The business man looked over at Paul with a new look in his eyes. Whatever his reason was for his intense prejudice it was evidently very strong with him. At last after a moment's silence he said,

"My agent informs me that your brother has sold some of the cattle, and will be able to meet the note on the first of the month. What I have been uncertain about was the exact condition of things on the farm and how much hardship would follow the loss of crops and so forth."

"I don't know," replied Paul gulping down a strong inclination to cry, as the picture of David slaving on the farm rose up before him. "They have not written me anything about selling the cattle. All I know is that the crops were a total failure. David would not sell the cattle at this time of the year except in case of great necessity. Yet he always had such a horror of debt, that he would much rather starve on the open prairie than eat a meal under a roof if he owed a man a cent, and there was anything with which to pay it."

"Your mother, I believe you told me, is an invalid?"

"Yes, sir," answered Paul, trembling and agitated. "She has not been able to do anything for years. She" Paul laid his head down on the table and sobbed. He could see it all now. David, in a fit of desperation, had sold some of the cattle at a time of all times

when such sale meant a great sacrifice all around. He knew David well enough to feel sure that if the note was due on the first, he would pay it or go out into the street a beggar. But that was not all. His mother and Ruth would have to suffer. The living on the farm had always been economical. To one not used to it, the way the family lived might seem, at times, almost stingy. Even more than that. Paul could picture actual want, David discouraged and blue at the total loss of the crops and the sale of the cattle, Ruth working like a hired girl about the house when she had a refined, sensitive spirit, capable of doing wonderful things, and doubtless longing to do them, and his mother, patient, uncomplaining, suffering, her thin pale face growing more anxious and worn, not for herself but for her children. In the violence of his impetuous nature Paul yielded to his feelings, and gave way before Mr. Gordon in a manner of which he began to be ashamed, as Mr. Gordon said nothing.

At last Paul raised his head and saw Mr. Gordon standing with his back to him, looking out of the window.

Paul steeled himself at once as the thought flashed through his mind, "This man is heartless ! He has it in his power to prevent this hardship on the farm, and he will not lift his finger to do it. What is it to him that David works like a dog and mother goes without necessary food! All he wants is the money, and probably his story about being a trustee of the mortgage is a lie!" On top of all this came the reproach to himself that while his brother and the

dear ones at home were bearing the brunt of all this poverty he, Paul, was having so good a time in school. But what could he do?

He was surprised when Mr. Gordon turned to see tears rolling down his face. In a voice that betrayed the keenest sympathy he questioned Paul kindly and fully about his home.

Paul grew ashamed of his hasty action in judging Mr. Gordon, and poured out the whole story of the struggle on the farm. The result of this interview was a promise from the gentleman that he would inform his agent to take no further action in crowding David for the money, as he had done, and also to confer with him about a renewal. In short, Mr. Gordon succeeded in assuring Paul that if possible David's action should not mean hardship to the family, though just how he would manage the affair he did not explain.

Mr. Gordon was a capitalist with means enough to pay the note of the third party if the money was demanded. But David was exceedingly high-spirited and independent and the whole affair would have to be managed carefully.

Mr. Gordon finally took his leave and Paul tried to work on his Greek lesson again, but he felt stirred up over the Boston man's visit, and very little Greek was dug out that night. In a day or two he had a letter from David in which mention was made of the necessary sale of some cattle, but nothing was said of the note. The first of December came and went and still nothing new from home. The mother's letters were always cheerful. Ruth wrote a bright

chatty letter once a week, but said little about affairs financial. Evidently the family was in a league to keep him in ignorance of the real condition of things on the farm.

An incident in Paul's life in commons calls for attention right here before we pass on further in his school life or go out to the farm again. On coming into commons to live, Paul had gone into the Shaw-sheen Boarding Club. Owing to the illness of the president of that club at the opening of the term the office was vacant and Paul had been elected president. His duties were somewhat responsible. He was obliged to act as steward for about seventy-five students and, with an executive board, manage the finances. But matters had finally come to a crisis at the boarding house. This had been precipitated on the morning of what was known as "Butcher's Dinner Day" which was also the day for the election of new officers.

For some time the dissatisfaction with the executive board had been very strong. The club was unfortunately made up of boys from rich families and from others not so well to do. The executive board, at the beginning of the school year, had been made up of the poorer boys who had run the club on strict economic principles for the sake of saving something each week from the maximum rate. This rate was three dollars, and whatever the club could save from that in the general expenses was divided up among the members.

Of course the boys with spending money wanted the maximum rate of board kept up all the time. That

meant better board, more to eat. The others were more willing to fare a little hard in order to save the extra quarter or sometimes half dollar per week.

The executive board held a meeting in Paul's room the evening before election.

"The fact is, gentlemen," said Paul, a little anxiously, "Tomorrow will be an exciting day. Our administration has been severely criticised and the chances are that we shall be defeated, and if we are, that means probably more trouble. For I am confident the other party will involve us in financial difficulties. We have run the club on a sound basis and the fellows ought to be satisfied with our management"

"But did you ever see a more ungrateful lot?" spoke up the first executive, a short, stout boy who looked as if he had an abundance to eat. "Here we've saved the club \$4.75 apiece for the quarter on the maximum list and they complain about the 'grub.' I don't see anything the matter with that."

"The milk was sour several times last quarter," said one member of the board.

"Yes, and that meat we got last week was a trifle tough, it can't be denied," said the third executive, with a faint smile. "As 'shorty Ed' said, where a man has to twist his legs around the rungs of his chair in order to chew a piece of Shawsheen Club beef, it is time to raise a calamity howl and turn out the administration."

"We were not to blame for those mistakes," put in Paul earnestly. "Such things happen in every boarding house. The fellows in the private houses

complain sometimes. But I feel as if our reputation was at stake on the issue of the election."

"There is no charge of dishonesty."

"I should think not!" Paul spoke with some indignation. "The only charge the opposition can bring is one of too strict economy. But that is what we fellows need to practice. We 're not here in the academy to have a picnic all the time."

"It will be a picnic to-morrow, anyway. The fellows can't say we don't give them a good „Butcher's Dinner“ every quarter, — roast turkey and cranberry sauce and all the fixin's. My! wish we had some now!"

There was a laugh at the frank hint that the fare at the Shawsheen had been a little short of late, and the consultation was resumed.

"Who is up for steward in the ranks of the opposition?"

"Count Alexander," replied Paul.

"What! the Count!" cried all the boys together in dismay. "What would become of the club if he once had the presidency?"

"It would cost us dear, I believe," said Paul with a faint smile.

The "Count," be it said, was one of the richest boys in the school, with an abundance of spending money. He, with others, had gone into the Shawsheen Boarding Club on account of the greater freedom from restraint there than could be found in the private houses. There was consequently great friction between them and the poorer students who really could not afford to pay over three dollars a

week for board. Add to this the fact that the "Count," as he was called owing to his somewhat aristocratic bearing and dress, was perfectly incompetent to manage a club like the Shawsheen, and the dismay of the executive board at the thought of his being at the head of affairs is readily understood.

The board held a long session. They finally decided to nominate for president and steward one of the most popular of their number. Paul positively refused to let his name be used. He argued that the boys wanted a change anyway, and the probable way to defeat Alexander would be to nominate a new man. After much discussion the board determined on the name of Charles Clark, a former executive who had given satisfaction. He was one of the poorest students, working his way through school, and a boy of good judgment, capable of managing the club wisely and in the interests of economy.

Another matter was discussed which had much to do with the final result of the whole trouble at the Shawsheen, but it will be seen what that was as we go on.

"Butcher's Dinner" at the "Shawsheen" was an old institution. It always took place at each quarterly election and was an exciting meal. The enemy fired the first gun by posting up on the wall just behind the president's chair a mock bill of fare. Some one had evidently labored half the night in getting up the production and crawled in a window before breakfast to post it up. It read as follows: —

WILLIAM O FARE.

8HAWSHEEN HOUSE CLUB.

Paul Sidney, President. John Hanford, First Executive. James Brewer, Second Executive. William Cullen, Third Executive,

Soup, Tin Can. Consomme a la Sydney. Economy. Boiled Water.

Fish,

Salt Cod just caught. Pickled Herring. Boneless Whales. Sharks' Teeth in Season. Jelly Fish to order.

Entries.

Boot-leg Tripe. Ostrich Gizzards. India Rubber Sirloin.

Bird Brains on Toast.

Buffalo Robes stuffed with Old Shoes (very fine).

Removes,

Boiled Eggs with spring chickens inside. Oatmeal ground by hand. Economy Administration Waffles, flour and water. Peanut Salad. Pigs' Feet Stew (very nice). Hash made of (?)

Dessert.

Sawdust Pudding, vinegar sauce. Dried Apple pie baked in tin boiler. Fly Cake. Watermelon Rinds. Ice Cream made of pure sky-blue milk. Fruit; stewed prunes of vintage of 1847. Nut-shells.

Tooth Picks.

Drinks,

Sour Milk three times a day. Coffee (from best chicory). Water with and without Milk. More Tooth Picks.

The reading of this production aroused some feeling on the part of the rival factions. Before dinner time some one had torn down the paper, and when Paul sat down to preside at noon, an enthusiastic supporter had pinned up a cabinet photograph of the president in the place where " William O Fare " had been. No one disturbed it, and the dinner proceeded as the Butcher's Dinner usually did with songs and speeches and toasts.

After the feast the fight.

Paul rose after the dessert had been carried by storm, and said, " We will now proceed with the regular business of the quarterly election. Nominations for president are in order."

Instantly one of the executive board arose and said, "Mr. President, I rise to a point of order."

"State your point of order."

"By the constitution unfinished business comes up before the election of officers. According to the bylaws an amendment to the constitution must be made in writing two weeks before quarterly election. Such an amendment has been made, and comes up properly for action at this time, under the head of business."

"The point of order is well taken. The chair sustains

it. Is the club ready to vote on the amendment ? "
"Read it! Read it!" Shouted a dozen voices.

The executive who had risen to this point of order had a copy of the amendment which he read as follows: —

„If at any time the Executive Board of this Club shall through careless or incapable management, involve the club in debt so that the maximum rate of three dollars a week per member shall be exceeded, the Board of Executives, of which the President and Steward is the chairman, shall he personally responsible for the payment of the excess over three dollars, and shall pay the same from their own pockets."

"Mr. President," continued the executive, "I move this amendment to the constitution."

"Is the amendment seconded ?"

"I second it!" shouted a dozen voices.

"Remarks on the motion are in order."

Then followed a wordy battle, some making speeches for, some against the motion. At last cries of "Question! Question!" drowned all attempts at speech making.

"Are you ready for the question ? All those in favor of the amendment say aye."

"Aye!" yelled about half the dining room, as it seemed.

"Those opposed will say no."

"No!" shouted what seemed an equal number of voices.

"The ayes have it," said Paul a little doubtfully.

"We doubt the vote," shouted the negatives.

"We will vote by a show of hands," said Paul.

"Those in favor of the motion will signify it by raising the right hand? Mr. Noyes and Mr. Bruce will count."

"Thirty-two," said the tellers, after counting.

"Hands down. All opposed, by the same sign."

Again the hands went up and the tellers counted.

"Thirty-two."

"A tie! A tie!" There were shouts and catcalls for several minutes.

When the noise had been quelled, Paul said quietly, "According to the By-laws, in case of a tie the chair casts the decisive vote. I vote in favor of the amendment. It is therefore carried. Nominations for president are now in order, if there is no more unfinished business."

But the president's action in voting for the amendment caused another roar of applause from the supporters of it. Knife handles beat a perfect tattoo on the table and spoons and tumblers clashed together, to the damage of several of the latter. The boys were beginning to get waked up to the occasion, and the evident closeness of the coming election for president was apparent from the vote already taken on the amendment.

As soon as quiet was restored one of the opposition jumped up and nominated Mr. Alexander for Steward and President.

„Three cheers for the great and august 'Count'!" yelled one of the wags of the Club.

"Order!" cried Paul sternly. "The chair will not allow interruptions to the nominations."

There was quiet again, as Paul was athletic enough to put out of the room any two of the club, and the boys respected him for his ability.

So the boy who had made the nomination proceeded after the custom of the club to make a speech favoring his nominee for the position.

This was followed by several seconds, each speaking, by the rules of the club, three minutes. Then one of the executive board put in nomination the name of Charles Clark as representing that part of the club desiring a careful economical administration of affairs.

"Are there any other nominations ? "

There was silence through the room. Evidently the two names were all.

" Prepare your ballots, then," said Paul.

By the constitution this was the way the president and executives were elected. Tellers were appointed, ballots distributed, and the votes gathered up in the midst of much shouting of the names of the rival candidates.

Evidently the contest was to be a close one.

"Are all the votes cast?"

"They are all in," answered the tellers. "The polls are closed."

The work of counting the ballots was not long. At its conclusion one of the tellers announced the vote as follows.

"For Mr. Alexander thirty-two. For Mr. Clark thirty-two. No election."

"A tie! a tie! We've got it! " shouted the crowd that voted for Clark. " The president has the deciding vote

and that settles it for us!"

Pandemonium was on again. All the knives and forks and the tumblers that remained whole were brought into service again and vigorously used for five minutes.

At last Paul succeeded in gaining order. His face was pale and his voice trembled a little as he spoke.

"The result of the balloting being a tie and the deciding vote being left for the chair to cast, in accordance with the constitution, the chair casts his vote for Mr. Alexander and he is elected."

The club was thunderstruck. Then some of Paul's friends shouted, „Clark! You mean Clark! Not Alexander!"

"I said Alexander and I cast my vote for him. Mr. Alexander will take the chair. I congratulate you," said Paul as he vacated the president's chair and took that of the newly elected officer, a custom which had been in vogue with the club for many years.

Hisses and groans rose from every part of the dining room. All of the Clark faction were puzzled. A good many were indignant. What could Paul mean? This was surrendering to the enemy with a vengeance. In the excitement of the hour as the election for officers went on, the tide of feeling was so strong against Paul and the old board, that a new board was elected throughout, every member of it a friend and ally of the "Count." The party opposed to economy triumphed at every point.

After it was all over the boys gathered in groups about Paul and demanded an explanation. He refused to answer their questions, and to their

surprise walked quietly up to his room. There was a good deal of talk. Some even went so far as to say that Paul had been bought by the rich fellows. But the idea was indignantly scouted by his nearest friends. Yet even they could not account for his vote on the tie.

As the term went on, affairs at the Shawsheen appeared to grow worse instead of better. It is true that for a week or two the bill of fare seemed to take on a new "tone of expression," as Mr. "Shorty Rex" put it. But the new management was evidently laboring under some embarrassment. The boys never grumbled so much as now. The maximum rate was kept up week after week and instead of having a little paid in at the end of each month no one was receiving anything from his three dollars. When the next quarter arrived the board was obliged to make a financial statement according to the constitution.

President Alexander, as chairman of the board, arose in some confusion of mind to make this statement.

"The fact is, gentlemen, that owing to various reasons the club is seriously in arrears this quarter. In fact we are behind nearly \$75 over all paid in."

That was as far as the "Count" got. A perfect hullabaloo of groans filled the air to put him out.

"Fire the financial statesman!" and other expressions were used. When a voice could be heard, one of the executives arose and tried to explain the reasons for such a report, and concluded by making the motion that an assessment be levied on the club members for the amount in arrears.

Instantly Paul rose. "Mr. President, the gentleman's motion is out of order. The club voted at its last meeting to amend the constitution, making all arrears due to carelessness or extravagance payable by the Executive Board. I maintain that that is exactly the condition of affairs at present. The honorable Chair and the Executives must, according to the constitution, settle this bill."

A chorus of "You're right! Let them settle!" "It's their funeral!" "Their picnic!" greeted the unfortunate president and his officers. Even the rest of the well-to-do boys thought it a good one on the administration.

In the end the "Count" and his compeers had to pay every cent of the arrears. Alexander confessed afterwards that he and the board had not remembered about the unlucky amendment to the constitution. Under the exultation of their election everything else was forgotten.

But the boys had had enough of the "Billion Dollar Board" as Mr. Rex called it, and when election came on after "Butcher's Dinner," the old board was re-elected, Paul as chairman.

"Speech! speech!" cried the club as Paul vacated Alexander's place, and came back to his old chair.

Paul smiled. "I haven't anything particular to say, fellows, that I know of, only this : I think sometimes it is well to let other folks try responsibility just to see how difficult it is to please everybody."

"That explains your vote on the tie?" asked some one.

"Perhaps so," replied Paul with a twinkle of the eye. As the club went out to its rooms, the professor who lived across the road could hear the boys singing
"For he's a jolly good fellow, He's a jolly good fellow,
He's a jolly good fellow, And he's our captain too."

This restoration to popularity with the boys did Paul a world of good at the time. He had felt exceedingly sensitive at the criticism passed upon his management as steward, and now that the boys had reinstated him after having tried another administration Paul felt happier than he had for a long time.

His struggle to make enough to pay his term bills and buy clothing and books and all the sundries demanded of academy life kept him very busy. If he had not been very rugged physically he never could have stood the strain. Besides the stewardship of the club, the sweeping out of the academy building, and the setting of broken glass in the commons, Paul had been asked by one of the professors who was troubled with weak eyes to read to him one hour every evening at fifty cents an hour. Many a night by the time Paul finished getting out his lessons his clock struck two or three in the morning and he reeled sleepily into his bedroom and lay down without undressing, to sleep like a log until six.

Up to the time of the Christmas recess he had roomed alone. But with the beginning of the New Year's term, as it was called, he was asked to take a room-mate. He was not at all eager for any one to come in with him. The quarters in commons consisted of one room for study and living room, with

two small bedrooms off from it, and a small closet for wood and coal. Paul had acquired a habit of talking aloud a good deal as he learned his lessons and he also liked to declaim in his room. All that would have to stop if he took a roommate. But the commons were crowded, and according to the rules, he would be obliged to share his room if it were called for. The new boy was going into the middle class and hailed from northern Vermont.

The first time Paul saw him he did not know whether he liked him or not. The master brought him up and introduced him and then hurried away, saying that he and Paul could probably arrange matters satisfactorily. The new boy's name was Jacob Wendell, and he carried a large black bag which he immediately set down on the floor, as soon as the master had gone downstairs, and began to unlock it. " Hullo ! " said Paul, somewhat taken aback by this cool proceeding. " What are you doing ? "

" Why,:- I thought - I - was-to - stay - here - with - you " - said the new boy slowly. " And I thought I might as well begin to feel at home at once. I 've got a pair of pants in here that has been folded up for three days and I thought I would take 'em out and hang 'em up so's the creases wouldn't show next Sunday." Without any further invitation to make himself at home the new boy proceeded to take out of the black bag his clothing and toilet articles, all of them of the plainest description, and with the utmost deliberation spread them out on the floor.

Paul did not know whether to laugh or get angry. He finally decided to laugh, and when he was through

the newcomer looked up and said, " What's the joke?"

" I don't know, unless you are," replied Paul laughing again. " Don't mind me. It's a way I have. If you see anything here you would like, don't hesitate to use it and make yourself at home."

" Thank you. If you 've got a brush broom handy I 'd like to borrow it a few minutes. I'll bring it back's soon as I 've done."

Paul got him his brush broom and Jacob proceeded to brush his clothing, going out into the hall to do it. Then he came back and without any more words carried his things into the empty bedroom.

When he came out into the main room he wanted to know what he was expected to do for his share of keeping things in order. Paul, whose habits of keeping things in order were, to tell the truth, somewhat irregular, looked surprised and asked, "What do you mean? "

"Well, don't you ever sweep or build a fire? And what am I to do for my share in keeping things tidy? "

"Oh!" replied Paul, "I see. Why of course the fellows in commons generally arrange for a division of work. If you will sweep out the room I will build the fire and get the water. Is that fair? "

"Plenty. How often do you sweep out? "

" Tuesdays and Fridays," replied Paul with a little blush as he looked around the room. The fact was it hadn't been swept out for a week, and the floor was covered with papers and all those little bits of rubbish that somehow will accumulate in a student's room.

"What day is it?" asked the new comer.

"Friday." Paul looked over to his calendar.

"Where is the broom?" was the next question put by the boy from northern Vermont.

"In the closet," answered Paul.

"Then I guess I had better begin to sweep out,"

Before Paul knew what to think, his roommate had taken the broom and was making a vigorous onslaught on the dirt. He raised such a dust that Paul grabbed his hat and rushed out of the room. He stayed out about an hour and when he returned the new boy was sitting calmly down in one corner of the room studying. Everything was dusted off and the place looked cleaner than at any time since Paul went into commons.

"Guess you haven't swept out more 'n twice a term, have you?" inquired Jacob.

But the question was evidently so free from any intention of giving offence that Paul could only laugh, and wonder at this new specimen. Jacob Wendell was a constant study to him as the days sped by. At the end of a week he thought he would like him. At the end of two weeks he didn't know. He was the oddest genius he had ever seen.

So the term went on and the summer days began to lengthen and Paul's time in the old school was growing shorter as the days grew longer. Graduation was coming on and in three weeks Paul's school life in Veronda would be over. Then, college, if he could go on with his studies. It was all very uncertain but he felt that his mother was praying for him.

CHAPTER VI.

GRADUATION DAY.

Graduation day at Veronda was an occasion when every academy boy put his best foot forward and kept it forward all day. There was, first of all, in the chapel, the master's address to the outgoing class; then after that, the orations in the big hall. At the close of these public exercises a banquet for the entire school was held in a big tent pitched on the campus if the weather was fine. After an hour of toasts and songs and a good time generally, the graduating class held its own special services out in front of the building. The day closed in a glow of splen-dor with a reception up in the big hall to which the girls in the neighboring seminary were invited.

Paul knew what graduation day at Veronda meant, for he had seen one of them. He had done so well in his studies in spite of his many duties outside the schoolroom, that he had been given an honorable place on the program, assigned one of the orations, and marked number four in rank out of a class of sixtythree. He was also elected by the class one of the speakers at the class exercises in the afternoon, and, determined to do the school and his class honor on the great occasion, he had written and committed to memory two very creditable pieces.

He had not tried to speak on the platform of the hall since the night he had forgotten his declamation. But a year and a half in the school had developed the

boy wonderfully. He was nearly twenty years old, and was fast getting into the realm of a strong manhood. He had more mastery of himself and less egotism than when he entered the academy. It had been a delightful life to him, these two years. And in spite of the fact that his thoughts would often wander out to the farm with a dreadful homesick feeling, Paul looked forward to graduation as in one sense meaning to him a possible college life. He had grown to have a great passion for books and study. More than half the class would enter college in the fall. He had the greatest longing to go with them. But for the time he was obliged to center his whole activity upon his two speeches. The three weeks that intervened between the close of our last chapter and the eventful day whirled by very rapidly.

The night before the great day Paul came into his room, after doing some extra work at the boarding club, and threw himself down on the old lounge exclaiming to Jacob, who was busy sewing a button on his vest,

"Tell you what, Jacob, I feel tuckered out. There has been a queer buzzing in my head all day. Shouldn't wonder if I was tired out a little."

Jacob looked up gravely and spoke in his usual drawling fashion, "You try to do too much. Now I believe that's a mistake. I'd be a fool if I tried to sew with four or five needles at a time and a thimble on every finger and both thumbs. It does n't stand to reason that you can manage the club, and sweep out the building, and set broken glass, and read aloud every night, and keep your studies going too. First

thing you know you'll break down, and that would be a pity!"

Paul glanced at Jacob with a little surprise. It was the first time the new boy had expressed anything like sympathy for him. He was remarkably grave, slow, deliberate, a fair scholar, almost ridiculously particular about his clothes and as pure as a child in speech and action. Paul was beginning to like him in spite of his oddities as he began slowly to see what a jewel lay within the rough unpromising exterior.

"Would you take care of me if I should be taken ill?" asked Paul as he lay on his back thinking over what his roommate had just said.

Jacob showed he was a Yankee by replying, "Would you take care of me?"

"Well, what do you take me for?" asked Paul somewhat indignantly. "Of course I would. I can't imagine you ever being sick though, Jacob. What disease would you prefer if you were going to choose one?"

"I don't know as I would have any choice. I should probably have a slow fever, anyway," said Jacob, without the shadow of a smile on his rather plain face.

"Yes, I expect so."

The answer came somewhat drowsily from the figure on the old lounge. Jacob went on with his sewing for a few minutes and then, as Paul did not say any more, he rose and went over by the lounge and saw that he had fallen into a very heavy sleep. He went back to his chair and resumed his sewing. When he finished he sat staring at Paul with a look of anxiety

upon his face. Then he shook his head as if debating some very serious question in his mind.

The next morning Paul awakened feeling very strangely and wondering where he was. He had a feeble remembrance of Jacob helping him to bed, but that was all. He felt lame and tired all over. His head throbbed, and as he dressed he felt so dizzy that he had to sit down several times.

Jacob had been out to get some water and on coming in advised Paul not to try to go out.

" Oh, pshaw! I'll be all right after breakfast! Why, I can't miss anything to-day! I 'm tired, that's all," was Paul's reply.

He pulled himself together with a great effort and went over to the chapel and filed in with the other boys to the senior class seats. The master, (how he had come to love him!) rose and offered his usual prayer, and then remained standing during a little interval of silence before he spoke his final message to the sixty-three boys sitting directly in front of him. He made no pretence to oratory as it has been commonly understood, but talked straight on. His strongest hold on the boys was their knowledge of his love for them. They knew it was the great motive of all his life work and nothing could possibly have influenced them more. Paul, suffering as he was, and feeling strangely faint, was conscious, nevertheless, of the master's influence.

The master said he wanted to suggest a few plain truths out of his own experience, not in the way of preaching or giving advice, but by way of help, just as a man who has been over a difficult road desires

to help others, and puts up guideboards and warning notices of dangerous places.

" I hope you will take away with you from this school; the truth that the good God has something particular for each one of you to do. There may not be any geniuses in this class; that remains to be seen. But there are sixty-three souls in it belonging to God and he intends each one of them to represent a part of himself in the world. Don't forget that, will you ? that you are, each one of you, worth more to God than all the \$60,000,000,000 that this country is said to be worth. Don't sell any part of yourselves to the devil. He will cheat you every time, for he hasn't anything of value to give in return for that which the great Father made so priceless. You will be tempted to do this very thing. Men will come to you and say, Do this, Do that, for money or applause or position. It is all the same thing; it is selling a part of God's property to his worst enemy, who will ruin it so that it can never purchase anything worth having again. Don't despise yourselves. If you do, other people will begin to do the same. You can't rise much higher than your own level.

"Another thing. If when you get through college and out into the world, as the common saying is, you begin to find out that you can do something wonderfully well, and your talent begins to be in great demand, do not regard that talent as given you to sell for cash alone, but be unselfish with it. If you begin to find that you can play some instrument like an angel, make a larger use of that talent than to coin dollars with it. Think how many selfish men of

genius are in the world already, who are simply taking advantage of the fact that they have gifts above most men to put a price on their performances and so shut the common people out of the enjoyment of their powers. I would like to have every boy in this class consider thoughtfully the way in which one of the most gifted men that England ever knew denied his poor countrymen the privilege of reading his beautiful writings because he would not allow his publishers to print any cheap editions of his works. The consequence is that today, the very people of England who of all others ought to have the benefit of these writings actually cannot afford to buy them. And yet this man was wealthy. He received \$25,000 a year for five years from one publishing house for one small part of his productions. He could easily have printed at his own cost a shilling edition of his works and scattered them all over England for the delight of the common people.

What does God give men great powers for if not to share them with others ? I hope this great truth will run all through your education. A selfish educated man or boy is a miser. If he is haughty, exclusive, never mingling with any except his own kind, he is a miser; he is hoarding up what was meant to be used, scattered all over the barren fields of men's empty lives. If the farmers sold all their grain they would never have any for seed. Education does not mean anything unless it means service, self-sacrifice, unselfishness. The best educated men are not those who know the most Greek and mathematics and literature. But the best educated men are those who

know the most of God. For knowing him means loving him. And loving him means obeying him, and obeying him sharing what He has given with the world, whether it be talents of mind, or wealth, or property. Jesus Christ was rich, yet he for the sake of the world became poor that we through his poverty might become rich.

You will find by the time you are through college that the world will be ready to ask you what you can do to help the cause of humanity. It won't care very much whether you can read Greek at sight or translate Horace into English verse or look pretty on the stage when you get up to say your little oration on Culture. It will not be very much concerned as to whether your ancestors were aristocratic or not, and it will not pay much attention to your society graces as a good dancer or whist player or solo performer. The world into which you will graduate from your collegiate course will not care much about these things that once seemed very important to an educated gentleman. But it will size you up for your ability to do the world some actual service in the way of making society happier and better. It will gauge your usefulness by your ability and willingness to give of what you have to those who have it not and who need it. For let me tell you this - it is no secret and no mystery - but as sure as the world is turning through space, the Door of the Twentieth Century is opening into the most glorious chamber of opportunities ever known to humanity.

"The greatest battles, the mightiest struggles, the most impassioned speeches, the most inspiring

sermons, the loftiest patriotism, the largest activity ever known to man are going to be found when that Twentieth Door of man's life on the globe swings open. What will be the object of all these battles, struggles, speeches, sermons, prayers, upheavals, revolutions? Mankind! At last the world is awaking from its selfish dreams of pleasure, its indulgence in genius and the works of art and the delights of man's works to a study of man himself, the noblest, most valuable and awful of all the creations of God. Humanity is at the front, and will be at the front during the next century. Every one of you boys will come up to that door of opportunities for humanity and look in. Every one of you will by that time have something to give the world. What will you do with it ? Will you take your gift of education and use it selfishly for your own ease or pleasure or power ? If you do the world will pass you by, and leave you in that enjoyment, perchance, unless it turn and rend you for sitting in ease while your brothers are perishing. But if you determine to use what you have acquired in order to add to that divine effort, rising, rising like ocean's tide to lift a needy humanity higher up towards its Master, then you will be using your education as it ought to be used.

May God's blessing go with you, dear lads. My best prayer for you is that you may all be true men and great men — true to God and your brothers, great in the use of that which has been committed to your care.

Are the days of the Heroes gone by,
That we should degenerate lie

At our ease, and scoff at the times?
What though the arms of our fathers be rusted!
Their swords in their scabbards with age encrusted
Have we none of our own to wield?
Have we not our own battle field?
Have we not our own war rhymes?
Forward! The age demands men
Shoulder to shoulder! And then
While our prayer to heaven uprise,
Let the loud cannon in volleys reverberate thunder
Let the fierce struggle surge over and inward and
under
The greatest of battles is ours,
It calls for the greatest of powers,
God help us to save men's souls“

The master's address was over, and the class rose in a body to give him the school salute which was always a part of the graduation day exercises. Paul felt himself stagger as he joined in the salute, and then the room swam around him, and the master's face grew indistinct. Then all grew black and he knew nothing more. He came to consciousness after a period that he could not measure, only to find himself in bed, in his room in commons, and Jacob sitting close by.

" What's the matter with me ? " he managed to ask feebly.

" You fainted in chapel. The doctor will be here soon. Don't you worry. I'll stay right here."

" I don't want to see any doctor. I don't need any. I've got to say my oration in the big hall. Let me get up."

Paul tried to rise, and was surprised to find himself so weak.

Jacob gently placed his hand on his shoulder and made him lie down again.

Paul felt his former faintness coming on, and everything grew indistinct as before. As he drifted away he knew that the doctor had come in and was standing over him and Jacob was also looking gravely at him. Then he lost all touch with what was going on as the tide of a mighty fever snatched his weary body and bore it out beyond the shore of consciousness.

The winter had been a hard one for David and Carl on the farm. The story of David's experience at this period can never be told. If it had not been for the mother and Ruth the young man would have run away and sought his own fortune. By the sale of the cattle he met the note and paid it to the agent without a word, but it had been a great trial to him to part with the stock at such a sacrifice. The winter was before them, and there was no assurance of a crop the next season. He and Carl had put up plenty of hay for the rest of the cattle. Then they went into the woods down by the river and for three hard weeks had cut wood on shares for their neighbor Peterson, who owned a timber lot, and let the boys have wood on condition of a certain number of cords cut and piled for him. They swung the axes to such good purpose that they not only cut enough for their own winter use but sold several cords; "enough to buy groceries with for a week," David grimly said to his mother one night when she remonstrated with

him for working so late.

The fact was, the boy was really full of pluck and courage, and after the first few weeks of disheartenment over the destruction of the crops and the struggle to pay the note he had pulled himself together and resolved that for the sake of mother and Ruth he would play the man and win.

"It's just this way, mother," he would say ; "you see I've got this great hulking body of mine as stock in trade. And here 's a lot of the finest land in the world. Great crops can be realized from it, because they have been. The farmers around here have made money at farming: and I don't see why we can't do the same. If the cyclones and grasshoppers and hail and drought and prairie fires and chinch bugs and mildew and rust that lie in wait for a farmer's life will only give us a fair chance one season out of half a dozen we ought to make a living. We can do it too, mom mee ! So don't you worry about my working. It 's all I 'm good for. I 'm only sorry I can't provide turkey dinners for you all the time."

The fact was, the stern economy of the farm that winter and spring invaded the kitchen and the fare was of the simplest order. Ruth managed admirably. David declared that he believed Euth could take a pint of hot water and fix it up so as to taste like an oyster stew without putting in anything but a little salt and pepper.

Ruth was fast growing into a beautiful young woman without knowing it. She was seventeen now, and the mother thanked God every day as she watched the girl at work about the house that if ever the Lord had

blessed any creature with a most happy and wholesome nature assisted by her own will it wjis evidently in the person of Ruth. Ambitious the girl certainly was. She did much thinking and planning and some dreaming as she performed the plain duties of housework. She was old for her years, and being a great reader and gifted with an unusual memory she was really well-informed and intensely interested in all that was going on in the world. She had a. long talk with her mother about what she would do some day to make a name and relieve the family from the burden of debt. She was a bit of a dreamer, this girl just stepping into the kingdom of womanhood, but her dreams had a definite purpose and sprung from a truly noble Christian character. For Ruth was Christian in every fiber. She was like her mother in that respect. Mrs. Sidney always grew quieter in feeling when she remembered the underlying Christian personality in Ruth and dreaded her future far less on that account.

"The girl will have many difficulties and temptations; it is inevitable with her peculiar make-up," the mother would say to herself, "but I can not fear the outcome of it all. Her Christian personality is stronger than anything else and it will save her permanently."

So the family struggled through the winter. As spring approached David planned for a larger area of wheat and corn than he had ever put in before. The struggles he endured to get seed, and the work he and Carl put in by way of preparation for the year's labor would make a long story. But at length spring

emerged from its chrysalis, the snow disappeared from the gullies, the new grass could be seen starting up in the warmer corners of the big pasture, and over all the prairie crept the soft sweet footsteps of reviving nature, ready to sprinkle the prairies in a few days with the blossoms of the pulsatilla and wild bionile.

he winter had come on very early the year before, and most of the prairie remained brown and unburnt.

David, realizing the danger, had plowed a fire break around the house and shed and considered himself safe. But it was a very dry spring. Every night they could see across the river, at least twenty or thirty miles away, great fires raging and all of the Sidney house prayed for rain and the starting up of the new grass.

One night they had gone to bed early after harder work than usual. The wind had been blowing dry and hard all day. After sundown it continued steadily from the south, blowing as wind never does except in prairie countries, with almost solid energy, sweeping over the great treeless, fenceless expanse as if with purpose, not a restless fickle wind, but one with an end in view.

Towards midnight David suddenly awoke and scented danger. As he stared out of the window he could see a thin line of red miles away. He knew what it meant and hastily waking Carl they dressed and went out. Yes, the fire had started in some way, despite all the precautions taken by the settlers in that sparsely inhabited section, and in the very place

of all others where it was most to be feared. Away to the north lay the river, a natural barrier to wide belts of fire, but off to the south lay broad miles of unsettled prairie not defended by gully, ravine, pond, breaking, firebands, anything. The cruel south wind had its restless hand behind that sheet of cavalry marching flame and was pushing it across the expanse almost as fast as a horse could run. The boys gazed at the grand sight with a feeling of awe. As far as they could see, a line of fire, miles and miles in extent, was sweeping around with a roar like a stampede of wild cattle, so that the house stood in the bend of a fast widening arc. By this time Ruth was awake and dressed and the mother was cautioning the boys about drenching their clothes in water if they should have to fight the fire at close quarters.

" The fire break is thirty feet wide and ought to stop any ordinary fire," said David. " But this wind is awful. We will try to save the house, but I 'm afraid our sheds will have to go."

He and Carl and Ruth at once began to drench the side of the house nearest the approaching torrent of flame with water. Fortunately the well was very near, and in anticipation of possible need two or three barrels and a large trough and all the available tubs had been filled the day before. The fire break extended clear around the house and sheds. It was one hundred feet from the sheds and haystacks, only one of which remained from the winter feeding. The greatest danger lay in the terrible wind. If that wall of flame came up to the fire break and leaped over, the

chances of saving anything were desperate.

Mrs. Sidney called out to the three workers to be of good courage. "I am praying, children," she cried; "it is all I can do, but I believe the Father will keep us. Ruth, you must be careful. Boys, if the fire leaps over the break do not run any risk in trying to save the sheds. Remember that our lives may be spared if we are wise."

On came the majestic wall of fire, blown by the wind fifteen feet into the air and curving its crest like a great wave about to break upon a rocky ledge at sea. The intense heat blew into the faces of the fire fighters even at the distance of the fire guard and in awed silence they watched that oncoming charge as if the enemy had been flesh and blood. It surged up to the plowed land, which was six furrows wide, and the wind stretched that great greedy tongue of flame out across the burned land between the two pieces of breaking. The heat was so terrible that David and Carl threw themselves on the ground, while Ruth, from the door, almost laughing at the comical aspect of the scene, in the midst of the great danger, threw a big bucket full of water over them. Then, as the fire break seemed to have done its work, at least in front of the house, the boys leaped to their feet and hurrahed in their excitement. But the danger was not over yet. One or two long forks of flame had shot across the breaking, and catching on the short grass and littered hay near the sheds at once started a line of fire within the guarded territory. This must be fought. Armed with old cloths dipped in water, David, Carl and Ruth rushed upon the enemy and began

whipping out the flames. The grass was shorter than that which had fed the fury of the big fire outside, but the wind as it blew towards the sheds and hay made it necessary to extinguish the small line of fire before it became uncontrollable. The three found their hands full. It was an exciting contest. They had no sooner extinguished one line of flame than another would break out in a more dangerous place. Suddenly Ruth exclaimed as she looked back at the house, „See! see! the house is afire!"

The great heat swept on by the wind had caught a corner of the dry pine-shingled roof. A large burning cinder must in some way have been carried there and when they had thought themselves safe from attack in that quarter the enemy had defeated them. But Carl had the speed of a wild animal as he flew towards the house. There was no ladder about, but he remembered that the well curb with its framework supporting the buckets was built so near to the lower part of the kitchen or well of the house that if he could reach the top of it he could spring to the roof and from there to the higher roof where the fire was now blazing.

He succeeded in reaching the roof, and climbing up to the fire threw the wet cloth he carried upon the flame. It was not enough to extinguish it; so he literally rolled himself over upon the blazing shingles until the fire was put out. In the excitement of the moment he hardly knew what he was doing, but he had a very determined purpose that he would extinguish that flame and he did.

In getting down from the roof, whether his foot

slipped or he had been injured by the fire David and Ruth did not know, and indeed Carl himself could hardly tell; but he seemed to lose all control of his hands and feet and rolled off the roof to the ground. When David picked him up and carried him into the house he was unconscious. He could only place him upon the bed and rush out again to save the sheds and the rest of the cattle. He and Ruth worked like half a dozen people. At last, blackened, panting, exhausted, covered all over with the marks of that night's battle, they stamped out the last spark of fire and saved their property. The next day they learned of the burning of dozens of houses in the path of that fiery whirlwind. Their own escape was due to David's thoughtfulness and care in burning an extra large break and to their heroic fighting of what fire came over. As soon as they could get breath they turned their attention to Carl. To him they owed the preservation of their house. David never could have done such a feat. He was too heavy to accomplish anything requiring such dexterity. Carl was severely burned and the breath had been knocked out of his body by his fall; so for two or three weeks he was obliged to stay in the house and let Ruth and Mrs. Sidney doctor him.

It was about this time that Ruth had an experience that must be recorded in this narrative in order that we may understand other events that belong to the unfolding of all these lives.

Carl had become like one of the family, and two years with the inmates of that isolated farmhouse had changed the boy wonderfully. With the rapidity of the

Scandinavian races in acquiring a foreign language, he had learned to talk very good English with scarcely a trace of his own idiom, except now and then a hesitation for the right word. He had developed also in many ways and had endeared himself to all by his faithful uncomplaining service. David had grown to have a great liking for him, and Mrs. Sidney often spoke of him as taking Paul's place, though her mother heart went out to the academy boy as her own. This last exhibition of Carl's affection for the family had opened the mother's heart still wider to the homeless boy. He was dangerously near being spoiled by the attention shown him, as he lay helpless and suffering from his burns.

He was rapidly getting well again and had gone out of the house one bright May morning to sit down under one of the larger trees, a short distance from the house, on a bench which he and David had made. In a little while Ruth came out to see that he was not in danger of taking cold.

"No, it's so warm I feel all right," replied Carl. "Ruth, won't you sit down here a minute, if you can spare the time? I would wish to speak something to you."

"Oh, yes," said Ruth cheerfully. "What is it?"

"Ruth," said Carl a little abruptly, "you know I love you, don't you?"

"Of course I do, Carl," replied Ruth quietly.

She had grown out of her girlhood into her womanhood with Carl so naturally that she had never thought of him except as a boy like Paul. Besides, Carl was a year younger than she. All that

made any other thought of him entirely impossible to her.

Carl looked her right in the face and said slowly, ' I don't mean I love you that way! "

Ruth would have been more stupid than we have described her if she had failed to understand Carls words and the look that went with them. She was startled for a moment with a nameless fear. Then her sense of the real meaning of it all rushed over her, and she could not help smiling as she thought of the boy declaring his love for her in that plain fashion. With that feeling went a pang of pain that anything of this kind should happen. But she replied to Carls words very quietly. There was not a particle of foolish sentiment about Ruth.

"Carl," she said, "I am sorry. You are only a boy"

"I'm not to blame for that," replied Carl doggedly, with a little of the stubborn sullenness of his race." And I'm not to blame for falling in love either."

"Well, I'm sure I'm not!" replied Ruth, a little bit angrily.

"I'm not blaming you," said Carl gently; "but I thought I ought to tell you. Can't you care for me a little?"

"Why, I do care for you a good deal, but not that way. What makes you so foolish, Carl?"

"What makes you so pretty? " asked Carl a little shyly.

Ruth colored and rose. "I shall not talk with you any more, Carl, until you get over feeling so."

Carl did not stir or ask her to remain. He simply said, "If you think I am going to get over it as if it were

some illness you are mistaken. I am just a boy, but our people grow old faster than you Americans. Ruth, you can't think hard of me for telling you?"

"No, I suppose not," replied Ruth slowly. Then, "I shall tell mother."

"I will tell her myself," said Carl flushing up. "You do not think me afraid, do you?"

"No, but it seems very foolish, Carl."

"It seems foolish to you because you don't care for me," said Carl sadly.

There was an awkward pause and then Ruth turned and walked back into the house. She was vexed at the whole affair. It seemed to her like a great mistake. She dreaded to have her mother know anything about it, and she did not know how David would take it. Altogether, Ruth's first experience with that emotion which influences and propels the thought and ambition of all the world was not pleasant to her. She had no feeling for Carl beyond an affectionate liking and felt sure she never could have. This action of his would make the simple, free, home life impossible any longer.

That evening after the Bible reading Carl asked Mrs. Sidney if he might speak with her alone. This was not an unusual request, as the children often wanted to consult her concerning their particular troubles or perplexities. When David and Ruth had gone out of the room Carl frankly told the mother his secret.

Mrs. Sidney was not greatly surprised. She had suspected something of the kind, although Carl's somewhat phlegmatic temper had made it difficult to

discover his real feelings. Just what she said to Carl must remain a secret between them. When Carl went to bed his eyes were wet with weeping, but the invalid kissed him and laid her hand in blessing on his head before he left her and the prayer of her loving heart went out for him long after he had fallen asleep.

Two weeks went by with nothing particular to relate. Carl did not speak to Ruth again, but the old times would not and could not come back.

David was so absorbed in the oncoming crops that it is doubtful if he caught even a suspicion of what was going on. If he had it is not easy to tell what he would have done. But one morning he rose after a very sound sleep and missed Carl. The two roomed together as Paul and David had done. Breakfast was ready and still Carl did not appear. He had not been seen about the sheds or in the pasture. But a short note, laid on the bed of the invalid and found there by Ruth as she came in to tell her mother, informed them that he had gone.

" I can not stand it any longer," he said; " so I am going to find work for myself somewhere. I thank you for all that you have been to me and shall never cease to pray the good Father to bless you all."

David looked up at Ruth stupidly while the mother read the note. „There 's something more than that! What ailed the boy, anyhow?"

Ruth sat down and cried, while Mrs. Sidney explained matters to David.

"What a big fool he must be!" was David's first contemptuous remark.

"My son!" said his mother gently. "Don't forget that the boy saved our home. He has done nothing dishonorable. He has acted like a Christian gentleman throughout. I am exceedingly sorry it has happened. Poor boy I He will have a hard time battling in the world alone."

David softened a little. " I didn't mean quite what I said; but I don't understand it. And it's a serious matter for us just now with all the work coming on. Ruth, did you care for him?"

" No," said Ruth in a muffled voice as she sat with her hands over her face. "I never could love him that way."

" Of course not! It's all nonsense!" said the practical David, almost losing his temper again. "But I don't see what he wanted to run away for!"

Mrs. Sidney could not help a smile. „Some, day you will, perhaps."

"Mother," said David, "you know I won't. Of course if I did fall in love with a girl I wouldn't run away from her just because she wouldn't have me."

" You don't know what you would do, David," replied his mother. There the talk ended that time.

When David went to town he inquired for Carl; but no trace of him could be found. He had vanished out of the neighborhood, and wherever he had gone he had evidently intended to leave no trail behind him. David faced the farm work alone. He succeeded however in working for a neighbor on shares in such a way as to get his corn cultivated. It was now the second week in June, — graduation time at Veronda. A week more went by. David went into town to get

some work done on a broken cultivator. As he went by the little telegraph office on his way home the operator called him in. There was a message for him. It was from Veronda. He read it and turned ghastly pale; then rushed out of the office and lashed his horses all the way home. He let them go into the shed yard and went in to his mother.

" You know you have always told us in case of danger to any one to let you know at once, as you are always ready for anything, feeling so sure of the love of God," said David with almost blunt abruptness.

"Yes," replied the invalid guessing the news at once.

"Is Paul in danger ? "

" I got this to day."

David gave his mother the telegram and sat down by the bed. Ruth came in just as Mrs. Sidney read aloud,

"Come at once. Paul very ill. Typhoid fever.

Jacob Wendell. Veronda Academy"

CHAPTER VII

Paul's sickness.

As Mrs. Sidney finished reading the telegram David lifted his head and tried to speak. Ruth stood a moment, shocked by the unexpected news, and then ran up to the bed, kneeled down by the side of it and threw her arms about her mother, fearing that the sudden news might be a fatal blow to the invalid. For a moment the poor woman seemed overcome. Then a remarkable thing happened. Mrs. Sidney smoothed

out the telegram and laid it on the bed in front of her, saying as she did so, " My children, we need God. Let us ask his help in this our time of need. David, come, kneel down here by Ruth; I want you."

David, choking down a sob, rose and then kneeled down by his sister, burying his face in the bedclothes, while the mother in quiet, peaceful tones swept her petition right up to the face of God on that strong wing of all enduring faith and love which lives seeing the invisible.

" Thou mighty and loving One," she said, " thou hast not forgotten us, we know. Thou art still hearing for us as a father for his children. We do believe this. If we do not, we can not do anything but despair. But, O thou merciful Father, look in compassion on us thy children at this time, and give us the blessing we need in this hour of uncertainty and trouble. For we do not know what to do. The poor lad is a great way off. It seems hard that he may die without feeling the touch of his mother's hand on his brow and her kiss upon his lips. O gracious Lord, our hearts yearn for him. Show us what to do. Thou knowest we are very poor and can not afford the expense of the long journey, and David can not leave the farm at this season of the year without great loss, and I can not rise myself to go.

But we unfold our desires and our needs before thee. We know thou wilt hear us and bless us somehow. O merciful Jesus, help us! O Son of Mary, and Son of God, give us of thine infinite wisdom, for the wisdom of man faileth us now. We will not complain or raise our hands against thee at all. For even if thy

messenger shall bear the lad away from this earth we know it will be simply into thy presence, for he is a disciple of thine, dear Lord, is he not? Help us then to believe in the things that can not perish, O infinite, loving One who seest our sore need, the storm has driven us into the harbor again. We would not have thee think we will never come except when tempest-tossed, for thou knowest if we have not enjoyed riding in the harbor of thy peace when all was well with us. But we have come now for shelter. And we shall need a pilot before we return. Reveal thyself to us, O Father! Give us wisdom and peace, and restore to life the dear lad away from home and kindred, and bless those who care for him at this moment. O Lord Jesus, by thy cross and bloody sweat, by thy resurrection and ascension, have mercy on us! We are in thy hands. But whatever happens we will not lose faith in thee nor our love for thee. For we know that nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. We ask all in his dear name. Amen."

When the mother ceased, David and Ruth remained some time on their knees by the bed, and not a word was uttered by all three for several moments. Then David rose and said firmly, as if his mind was made up, "Mother, I shall start for Veronda at once."

"I don't see how you can go." said Ruth anxiously. The mother did not reply immediately. Then she said " My son, it is the will of God. The Lord will take care of us. Go thou and may he be with thee."

." But we have no money, and it will cost twenty-five dollars for the fare to Veronda one way," said Ruth,

looking at the mother with a troubled face.

Mrs. Sidney was quiet a moment. Then she spoke firmly.

" David, you can not start anyway until nine o'clock tomorrow morning. The eastern express has gone through to day. It is now nearly noon. Go over to Peterson's, and make arrangements with him and his sons to take care of the crops on shares, if you are detained beyond harvest. Then take two of the cattle and drive them into town and sell them at Manley's. Mr. Manley was a warm friend of your father, and I am sure he will give you all the cattle are worth. While you are in town you can get what few things you may need for your journey. Ruth can manage the milking, and I am certain that the Petersons will help us at this time. We can make good terms with them about cultivating the corn, and if you are gone through harvest they will take care of it. They took the Pinewood farm that way two years ago, you remember."

"Yes," replied David, now thoroughly roused and responding to his mother's clear wisdom. "I will do that very thing. The Petersons have always been good neighbors. I'll go right over."

He started at once, realizing that a big half day's work lay before him. He was gone almost two hours and coming back reported favorably. Their neighbors would take care of the crops on shares which David arranged to their mutual satisfaction. He sat down a few moments to eat a mouthful before going into town, but did not feel hungry, every mouthful choking him as he thought of Paul perhaps dying at

that very moment. He picked out two of the finest cattle and drove them to town. It was a slow drive and the sun was just setting as he entered the village. He had to go by the post office before he could reach the market and he stopped a minute to go in. There was one letter for him with a Veronda postmark. He tore it open, trembling, and read the following brief note.

Mr. David Sidney,

My dear sir: — I am a total stranger to you but a friend of your brother, who may have written to you about me. He is very ill in his room in commons here at Veronda and his roommate Jacob Wendell has been taking very faithful care of him for two weeks. It was by accident that I came up to Veronda from Boston today and learned of Paul's illness. He is very ill of typhoid fever, and I have taken upon myself to write this to you in case the fever should terminate fatally, that you might be warned or if possible come on to Veronda. I have advised Jacob Wendell to telegraph in case of necessity. The fever has not yet reached its turning point, but other complications may shorten the poor boy's life. You will pardon me for inclosing a check for fifty dollars in case you can come on to see Paul. I thought that probably you might not be able to get the money together on short notice. You may consider it a loan, of course, and pay it back at any time.

I am very cordially yours,

William R. Gordon.

David cashed the check at one of the stores where he traded and started for home with the cattle. It was nine o'clock when he reached the house, and after putting up the team he came in and without a word handed the mother Mr. Gordon's letter.

She read it and clasped her thin hands together in thanksgiving. "I told you God would take care of us. See how clear the way has been made for us!"

"Mr. Gordon is the man who holds the mortgage, don't you remember, David!" said Ruth eagerly. "Paul wrote us all about it last year."

"Yes, I remember. He holds it in trust for another party. It is very kind of him to send this money just now. Of course I can pay it back if the crops turn out well. I shall pay it back, anyway."

David spoke in a low tone, but it was easy to see that he was reluctant to take the money under any conditions. Only the urgent need of the case could move him to use it. The thought of Paul's danger overruled everything else.

The next morning David started. Ruth drove him in and watched him off as the east bound express disappeared across the prairie. The tears ran down her face as she started for home. On the way she remembered that David had thrust an envelope into her hand at the last moment. She pulled up the horses in the middle of the prairie and opened the envelope. A piece of paper dropped out and two ten dollar bills. On the paper was written : —

„For you and Mother. I can get along with the rest.
David."

It was like him to forget that the expenses of his trip would probably be twice the sum he had reserved for himself. It was thoughtless, but came from David's utter self-forgetfulness.

The tears came to Ruth's eyes many times during that drive home and it almost seemed to her that God had forgotten them as she thought of all the uncertainty and trouble that had surrounded them so long. She had a hard cry all alone on the prairie and it did her good. By the time she had put up the horses and come into the house she was calm, for her mother's sake. She was surprised to find the invalid so cheerful.

"Somehow," said Mrs. Sidney with a peaceful face and a look that seemed to see unearthly things, "somehow I can not help believing that the dear boy will be spared to us. I can not think he is going to die."

"Why, mother, what gives you such hopes?"

"I can not tell just why," was the peaceful answer; "I only feel so. Dear lad! the good God keep him."

The night came - a lovely night in middle June. Darkness settled down, and the two, mother and daughter, sat hand in hand and prayed for the two absent ones. Night shrouded the lonely log house as they sat there in the darkness and petitioned the Father of all light and life for the dear ones of the home.

It was the third week of Paul's illness. Jacob was watching faithfully by the bed at the close of a beautiful day when all the forces of nature seemed conspiring to entice humanity to turn world

worshippers. The campus was a beautiful expanse of green, the old elms on the hill were majestic with foliage, the night air was soft and fragrant, and the quiet of life in its repose reigned in and around the commons buildings.

Jacob, who was never a handsome looking youth at his best, presented a very worn-out appearance. For two weeks, day and night, he had watched by Paul, not even taking off his clothes, and snatching what little time he could for eating and the smallest amount of sleep possible. His face was haggard and his hair, always thick and stubborn, was massed in a tangle over his head. He had insisted in his slow but determined manner on taking the entire care of Paul, and the doctor had not objected after seeing what a splendid nurse Jacob really was. No woman could have equaled his touch and his good judgment. He seemed to be a born nurse. So it happened that although one or two of Paul's classmates had volunteered to help, Jacob had declared himself able to take all the burden, and the doctor had allowed it. If the master had been present he might have arranged matters differently. As it was, he had been summoned to a distant part of the State immediately after graduation day and had not yet returned.

Paul had been conscious several times during his illness, but most of the time he had been delirious, shouting out fragments of the graduation day orations which he had not been allowed to speak before the class. This evening he lay quiet, seemingly exhausted by the fierce burning of the fever that clutched so grimly at his young life. Jacob, who

knew the symptoms of his patient, rose and looked at him anxiously and muttered a few words that betrayed great fear of the result. "Almost time for the doctor to come," he said, consulting his watch.

At that very moment a step sounded outside and in another instant some one came up to the door, hesitated long enough to read the number over the archway and then came carefully up the staircase. Jacob went out into the hall to meet the visitor. It was David, travel-stained and anxious. He had come through in a common day coach all the way, getting what sleep he could, which was very little. In the dusk he could not see Jacob's face, but he reached out his hand and said in a choking voice, "I'm David Sidney, Paul's brother. How is Paul? Is he" —

"No, he's not dying," replied Jacob more quickly than his habit was, in reply to David's fear.

"Thank God!" cried David. "Is he conscious? Can I see him?"

"Yes. There will be no harm. Come in."

David entered and went into the little bedroom and gazed at Paul hungrily. He was, as we have said, very undemonstrative, but his big heart yearned for his younger brother now. He turned to Jacob and went out into the other room.

"Say, you must be worn out. I'll watch now. You go to bed. Tell me what medicines to give."

"The doctor ought to be here this hour. Wait till he comes up. Then I'll get a nap if you think you can do the work."

"Of course. I didn't get much sleep coming on, but I can't sleep now, anyway. Do you consider - does the

doctor consider the case serious?"

"Yes, that's the reason I telegraphed. There has been no change one way or the other since then. I know the doctor has little hope."

"Do you?" asked David, feeling as though much depended on Jacob's answer.

He was very slow in replying. Then he said, "I've seen sicker folks get well."

Just then the doctor came up. He remained a long time by Paul in the little bedroom. When he came out, David seized his arm.

"Is there any hope for him, doctor?"

"There is always hope. He would have been dead before this if Jacob hadn't been so faithful," was the doctor's somewhat evasive reply.

David insisted on knowing just what to expect.

The doctor gave very little hope, but said Paul had a good constitution and that there was a fighting chance for him. After giving directions he went away, and David insisted on taking charge for the night. Jacob yielded, feeling that one good night's rest would make a new man of him for the struggle which he saw was not yet over.

The details of the next three weeks would make a long story. It was a terrible battle with grim death. Every day it seemed to the weary but high-strung watchers, as they took turns at the business of nursing, that the feeble spark of life must flicker and go out. Every night brought the dreadful horror of another fierce battle with delirium and its reaction, during which Paul sank into a condition so far away

from all living force, that it seemed like the miracle of a new creation when he rallied and renewed the struggle.

At last a night came when the turning point was actually reached. Both David and Jacob were awake that night. The doctor was with them, and the commons were still — so still that it seemed to the young men as if all the world had abandoned them. It was between two and three o'clock in the morning, the time when so many spirits are released from the tabernacle of the flesh. Paul lay like one dead. Only the doctor's trained experience could detect any sign of life. Nothing could be done. The three stood there in the little room and waited. The minutes seemed days to David. Suddenly Paul stirred. The doctor lifted his finger in warning. They all waited. Again there was that almost imperceptible movement, and the doctor's grave face lighted up. The hour went by. The town clock a mile away down by the river struck three. There was a faint increase of light in the far east and David, as he stood where he could look out across the campus, wondered if he had not counted wrong and it ought to be four instead of three. Then the doctor beckoned them out into the other room.

"The boy is past the worst. He is, if I may judge, in position to battle through. The fever has taken an unexpected turn and all depends on good nursing now."

How grandly the sun came up that morning! David insisted on staying up with Paul while Jacob took a nap of two or three hours. So it happened that when about an hour after sunrise Paul opened his eyes for

the first really lucid interval in six weeks, they rested on the face of David, who happened to be sitting just where Jacob had been on graduation day when Paul had lost all consciousness.

He was too feeble to be much surprised, and David simply said in answer to his look of inquiry, "Yes, Paul, I 've been here with you for three weeks - Jacob and I. You 're better. You are going to get well. Mother and Ruth and the farm are all right."

Paul did not try to say anything. He was just able to smile, and then he sank into a restful sleep while David swallowed a tear and cried out of his heart, "Thank God, for the dear mother! Her prayer is answered!"

Paul's recovery was as rapid as any one as sick as he had been could expect. As soon as all danger was over, David began to grow restless. He felt as if the farm needed him. Ruth had written very encouraging letters about the wheat. It was an immense yield, and the Petersons had harvested it all right. It was spring wheat and was all cut and in the shock ready for stacking. Everything had gone on well at the farm. The news of Pauls safety was enough, even if everything else had failed. So Ruth's letters ran on, but all the same David could not get over a feeling that he ought to hurry back. Jacob could see that he was uneasy, and one evening when Paul was able to sit up in the study room Jacob turned to David and said, " Say, what's the use of two nurses for an invalid that eats the way ours does ? You had better go home. I'll stay here as long as Paul leaves me anything to eat."

" Yes, you are not needed here any longer" put in Paul with a laugh that did them good to hear. "Of course we would like your company, but the farm must need you more. I don't know," added Paul a little more seriously, " but I ought to go back with you. Here it is the last of July and I've my college examinations to pass if I go, and you will need me on the farm more than ever."

"No," replied David thoughtfully "you must go on now that you are started. You never will be in a better position. And the crops have been good this summer. See, Peterson has sent me money enough to get home with. Mother made him do that. But if that forty acres of wheat turns out as well as we expect, it ought to be pretty good. I must be getting back to see about the corn and the cattle and all. I expect mother needs me. Ruth's been a plucky girl. Paul, I don't believe you need me any more if Jacob can stay by you until you can peg along alone. I 've had some talk with him and he says he is willing."

" But Jacob hasn't had any vacation," put in Paul, who was just beginning to comprehend all that his roommate had done for him. " And the academy opens again in September."

"I don't care for any vacation," said Jacob. "I never had one, and would n't know what to do with it, anyway."

"Why, don't you want to go and see your folks ? " asked David, who, like Paul, had begun to take a great liking to the northern Vermont boy.

"I haven't got any folks to see," replied Jacob quietly.

"What! no father or mother?"

"No. My mother is dead. My father" — Jacob did not finish.

"No uncles or aunts or distant relatives?" asked Paul, who knew nothing about Jacob's family matters and had never before questioned him about them.

"No," said Jacob gravely, "not one - that I would care to spend a vacation with."

"Then I should think you would want to go and see your girl," said Paul, a little flippantly. But he was feeling pretty well after his long illness and overflowed with thoughtlessness and nonsense.

Jacob looked up and replied, "I had a girl once, but she gave me the mitten after I called at the house twice because she said I made her nervous talking so fast."

David and Paul roared at Jacob's reply, but he never smiled, only looked at Paul with a twinkle of the eye which was the one handsome feature of his plain face.

"Well, then," said David, "I might as well start for home now that you are all right, Paul, and Jacob has nowhere else to go."

"That's all right. I was going to spend the summer here in Veronda, anyway," said Jacob. "I had planned to sit up a good deal nights and study, and I've done half of what I planned. I'll stay by Paul until he is able to go to college."

So David went home satisfied that he could do nothing more, and assured that Jacob really desired

nothing better than to remain and nurse Paul into stalwart health again. Mr. Gordon had been up from Boston several times, and David had thanked him heartily for the money, and promised to pay it back when wheat was threshed. Mr. Gordon offered to let him have more to get home with, but David told him, a little proudly, that he didn't need it, although Peterson had sent him barely enough to buy his ticket. However, he returned home in good spirits, arrived at the log house one morning to the great joy of the mother and Ruth, and found everything on the farm in a more flourishing condition than he had known since his father's death.

"Tell you what, mother," he said after he had kissed her and had rejoiced to see her looking so well, "things seem to go on so well while I'm away that I guess I'll go oftener."

"I hope you will not have to go on the same errand again soon," said the mother, smiling. "We have been very much blessed. Ruth has been a great comfort to me. So Paul is really getting strong again."

"Strong ! Why, lie was eating a dozen eggs a day and no end of toast and jelly and steak when I left. You ought to have heard his roommate, - a queer fellow that Jacob! - you ought to have heard him talk about the way Paul eats. It was worth the trip east just to hear him."

" Is he nice ? " asked Ruth.

" Nice ? Well, he 's queer. But he beats all the fellows you ever saw to nurse any one. If I ever have a fever, send for Jacob Wendell."

"Is he good looking? Paul never told us. He said he

would try to get his picture, but never sent it."

Ruth asked the question simply, and David could not help smiling a little.

" Well, he isn't a prize beauty, by any means. But I tell you, mother, I 'm beginning to find out that good looks don't count for much without a good heart."

"Are you?" asked the mother in the quizzical tone she sometimes assumed with her children. "I found that out a good many years ago. The sooner we find that out the better. I don't care how this boy, Jacob, looks. According to the doctor, as you wrote, David, Paul owes his life to the care his roommate gave him. He will have our gratitude as long as we are able to remember."

"That he will," said David heartily. Then he went out to walk over the place and see how stock and crops had succeeded during his absence.

That was a glorious autumn on the farm. Everything seemed to smile on the Sidneys. They could hardly believe it when after threshing and dividing their share with the Petersons David said he had two hundred and eighty dollars clear cash over all expenses. He sent Mr. Gordon the fifty dollars and made another payment on the mortgage. And there was the corn crop still to come. A most magnificent Indian summer followed, and the prairies swam in the golden blue mist. The sound of the prairie chicken and the call of the killdeer were music in the ears of David as he stripped the husks from his corn, as it stood in the fields, and piled up great mounds of the hard yellow grain in the bins he had built the year before, and which had stood in reproachful

emptiness all winter.

He had been out to the big pasture one evening to look after a part of the fence that needed mending. It was getting dark and he had picked up his tools and thrown them into the wagon to go home, when he saw some one coming towards him through the dusk. The person, whoever it was, was making straight for the fence with long strides, as if anxious to escape some one in pursuit. What was David's astonishment as the figure drew nearer to recognize in his face and figure, Carl! He was ragged and traveled-stained. As he came near David, who had one hand on the wheel of the wagon and was just ready to jump in, exclaimed, partly to himself and partly to Carl, " Well! And where did he come from?" Carl, halting on the other side of the pasture fence, looked up at David in silence for some moments before he spoke.

Paul was strong enough by September to go down to college examinations. The master made arrangements to pay all doctors' bills, as he often did in case of illness among his boys, and Paul started in on his college course with a light heart and a light purse, but with no burden of debt. He simply had the battle of four years ahead of him this time instead of two, and being in the city now instead of the country, the work he could get to pay his way was somewhat different. But he had no false ideas about what constitutes the work of a gentleman, and being willing to do anything honest he soon had something to do. His entrance on college life was marked by an event somewhat unusual, perhaps, but it was an

event that left its mark on Paul all his life. When he came to look around for a room he found that nearly everything in the halls was taken. There was one room which had been occupied the year before by a sophomore, a student by the name of Barton. He was willing to take Paul in as roommate if he would pay for half the room furnishings. Paul, after failing to find a suitable room anywhere else, reluctantly agreed to do so. David had sent him part of the harvest money to start out on the college life, and Paul paid Barton a good sum for his share of the room. He did not like the young man, and compared him with Jacob, to Barton's discredit. Barton assumed airs that Paul could not endure and went with the fast set and brought men up into the room that Paul could not like. Often there would be half a dozen fellows up in the evening, who would make quiet study an impossibility by their loud talking and card playing and smoking. The room would be half filled with smoke, and Paul, who had no scruples about playing cards, but could not afford the time wasted over them, would often take his books and go out to study in the college library or reading room. But this was an annoying thing and more or less of a nuisance, and he felt as if he was not getting all that he had expected out of the college life.

There was another thing that gave Paul uneasiness. He had always been in the habit in Veronda of reading in his Bible at night and then kneeling down by his bed to pray. He had read Tom Brown at Rugby and had often declared that he did not see what Tom wanted to be ashamed of in kneeling down to say his

prayers in the dormitory before all the other boys. Yet since coming in to college Paul had found it easy to excuse himself from this habit. The two beds were in the same room. In fact, it was all one large living and study room. Somehow Paul thought it might look to Barton as if he, Paul, were a crank or a pious hypocrite if he were to kneel right down there before him in the same room. But Paul's conscience troubled him and one evening he had been so disturbed that he said to himself, " Now it looks very much as if I was a coward in this matter. I wonder what mother would say. I 'm pretty sure she would say I ought to kneel down just to be easy in my own conscience. And I 'm just sure I never shall be until I do kneel down, even if it isn't absolutely necessary that I should. The fact is, if I am a coward in this matter I am denying Christ, and mother would say so."

That same evening Paul kneeled down and uttered his prayer in silence, conscious that Barton saw him. To his surprise Barton said nothing. A week went by and Paul continued the habit. But one night when a crowd was in the room playing cards and laughing, Paul, tired out with some unusually hard work, determined to go to bed, and quietly kneeled down as usual. The crowd of card players saw him. They quit laughing and talking, and then there was an awkward pause. Then Barton uttered an oath, somebody said something funny and the playing and laughing went on. Paul was so tired that he went to sleep in spite of the racket around him.

In the morning Barton confronted him during the interval before morning lectures.

„Say, Sidney, I want you to understand that this sniveling, canting prayer-meeting habit of yours in this room has got to stop. I don't intend to have the fellows guying me about rooming with a parson and all that stuff. So just let up on it, will you? "

Never in all his life had Paul felt so like knocking any one down. His blood boiled and his heart throbbed, and he clenched his fists and set his teeth together. But a vision of the dear sweet face of an invalid came up before him and prevented him from giving way to his feelings. He waited a moment before saying anything. Then he looked Barton full in the face and said very firmly, " Mr. Barton, half of this room belongs to me. I own my bed and the part of the room where it stands. As long as I room here I shall do what I please, so long as I am confident it is right and does not trespass on your rights in any way."

Barton seemed staggered for a minute. Then he said, getting a little excited - " It's a sniveling canting thing, and I want you to know it is mighty unpleasant for my friends."

" Your friends! " exclaimed Paul, with great difficulty restraining his passion. Then he calmed down, and said quietly, " If you have a complaint against me, I think I have one against you. Have I ever objected to your card parties, to the noise and confusion which have filled this room three or four nights every week since I came in here ? Have you respected my rights as half owner of the room when you knew I wanted a quiet place to study and couldn't find it without

going out somewhere else ? And do you thing I am going to quit praying just because you don't like it ? I want you to understand that I know what is my right in this matter and intend to use it so long as I harm no one."

Just then the bell rang for lectures, and Paul picked up his books and went out, leaving Barton, who seemed unable to reply. But the next four weeks were hard for Paul, although he persevered in his determination. Barton provoked him in numberless ways. We wish we could say, as the good stories do, that Paul's act converted Barton and made a saint of him. It did not do anything of the kind, however, and sometimes Paul wondered if he had been too firm in insisting upon his rights in the matter.

He wrote home to the mother, and told her all about it. His heart rejoiced when he received her answer. She thought he had done just right and commended him, only warning him not to do or say anything that would unnecessarily provoke Barton, and to act like a sensible, generous, cheerful, Christian gentleman. Unless Barton was a thoroughly bad fellow he would come to see the reason for Paul's motives, or at any rate respect them. She also suggested that Paul try to get another room if possible.

Paul had already thought of that, but he could not afford to purchase another half interest in a new room and he could not take his things and sell them even for half what he had paid. So he tried to make the best of it, but led a thoroughly uncomfortable life up to the Christmas holidays. He had succeeded in getting a temporary place as clerk in one of the big

stores for the vacation, which was three weeks. The pay was small but it would cover his board and leave him a little over. Barton went home, and Paul breathed freely as he thought of the quiet weeks all by himself in the big hall. Nearly all the fellows had gone, and he had planned to spend all his extra time out of the store in his favorite study of engineering. One evening, a week before Christmas, as he came across the college park about ten o'clock he was surprised to see a light in his room. He had not been in it since morning. Like most of the men in the hall he never locked his door, a custom which had its disadvantages but was not considered at all unsafe. He went right up the two flights of stairs and as he came along to his door the thought came to him that just for fun he would knock. He pounded on the door vigorously, and a well-known voice inside said: "Come in, and make yourself at home."

Paul rushed in and wanted to embrace the visitor. "Jacob! Where did you come from?" Then drawing back a little he said with a twinkle, "Have you swept out yet?"

"No; but it looks as if it wouldn't hurt the room any. You haven't swept more than once or twice since last September, I guess."

Paul shouted, and then sat down, delighted to see his old roommate.

"But what are you doing down here?" he finally asked.

"I'm going to college."

"What! I thought you had another year at Veronda!"

"I made it up this term."

"What! What for?" asked Paul amazed.

"So as to come down here," replied Jacob. "I'm going to room with you!"

Paul's face fell. " But I 've got a roommate!"

"Have you? " asked Jacob. " Then I'll buy him out, if you'll lend me the money."

Paul stared hard at Jacob and the two sat and talked long into the night.

CHAPTER VIII

A CHRISTMAS EXPERIENCE.

"David," said Carl, "I am pursued. Will you help me?"

"Of course I will," responded David promptly, but in great astonishment. "Who 's after you ? What 's the matter?"

Carl for answer crawled through the fence and came close up to David. It was then that David saw how wretched and desperate he appeared. He glanced back over the prairie with the look of one hunted for his life, and spoke hurriedly.

"I Ve been to work in the quarries at Stoneton, fifty miles down the river. Last week one of the bosses missed some money and a gold watch from his room. I have been sleeping in the room next to his, and he charged me with the theft and threatened to have me arrested. I was frightened and ran away, and yesterday I saw a party after me. They have been on my track all day. I slept out on the prairie last night.

Hark!" Carl clutched David's arm and the two listened painfully. Over the prairie came the sound of galloping horses.

"Get into the wagon!" David exclaimed and in another moment he had leaped in by the side of Carl, who had obeyed the order at once. They were inside the pasture, and the great gate was a quarter of a mile away. David turned the horses and started them off on a run. He hadn't time to question Carl about his experience since leaving the family. Indeed, there was room only for the one thought of getting the lad to a place of safety in case the horsemen whom they heard were in pursuit of him. It never occurred to David to question him about the theft. He took it for granted that he could not be guilty, and saw no harm in protecting him, inasmuch as he had so strangely appeared and begged for help. There was more or less confusion in David's mind as to the whole affair, it had been so sudden; but as he neared the opening in the pasture it flashed upon him that the last place in the world to hide Carl would be in the house or about the barns and sheds. It must be said that it did not once occur to David, any more than to Carl, to allow the arrest to be made and prove the innocence of the accused. If Carl had not run away in the first place it would have been better. By the time the team had turned out of the pasture upon the road leading up to the house he had made up his mind with some distinctness on one or two points.

He pulled up the horses and spoke to Carl.

"There's no place around the house where you can

hide. Do you remember that old cyclone cellar on the Grice place, this side of Peterson's ? If you could stay there" —

"Yes, yes, I don't want to - I mean I couldn't hide on the farm; it would get you into trouble," said Carl hurriedly. "Take me over to Grice's. I'm sure no one would find me there!"

The two boys listened again and this time they could hear the galloping sound which in the darkness of an autumn night on the prairie can be heard so far.

David gave the horses whip and rein and peered anxiously ahead as he took an old road leading to Grice's. It was two miles away and it was now growing dark very fast and there was danger of coyote holes in the unfrequented road. However, no mishap occurred and he drove up by a deserted pile of old poles and straw, the remainder of what had been a miserable old shed and house. Close by was a cyclone cellar familiar to Carl, who had often passed it on his way to Peterson's. He jumped out of the wagon and ran around to the opening. The steps were still there and the excavation was dry.

" I can spread some straw down and sleep nicely," he said.

He seemed very tired - thoroughly worn-out, in fact. To David's surprise he asked no questions about his mother or Ruth. David said something about being sorry to leave him in such a place all night and was on the point of adding that Carl had better come back home with him.

" Oh, no, it's all right. I'll be comfortable here. They would be sure to catch me at the house. You have

done all I wanted."

"I'll come over in the morning with something to eat," said David slowly. He turned to go. "Pshaw! This doesn't seem just right, to leave you here. Don't you think you had better give yourself up, and prove your innocence and then come back to the farm again ? "

" No! no!" said Carl nervously. "You leave me here. I cannot be arrested!"

He seemed so agitated over the mere thought of arrest that for a minute the suspicion flashed upon David that Carl was guilty. But he banished it at once as unworthy of his knowledge of the boy.

"Well, good-bye, then. I'll come early in the morning."

" Good-bye," said Carl.

David left him there and disappeared across the prairie, now wrapped in night. He drove back by a different road and came into the grove about the house from a direction opposite the pasture section line fence. As he drove up, Ruth came out.

"David," she called out in a low tone, "did you see the men? "

"No; what men?" asked David as he unharnessed.

Ruth followed him out to the barn. "Some men rode up about five minutes ago and inquired if we had seen Carl! One of them insisted on coming into the house to search. At first I was afraid for mother. But as soon as the man saw that she was an invalid he acted civil enough, and when mother told him Carl was not in the house he went out. There were two other men with him. They rode around the shed and went in. They haven't been gone five minutes."

"Which way did they go?" asked David, as he brought

in some hay from the stack outside.

"Off towards Grice's or Peterson's. I couldn't see exactly."

"I wonder how I missed them," muttered David to himself. He decided to tell the mother all about his encounter with Carl, and after the chores were done he went in and related to the invalid and Ruth all that had happened. Mrs. Sidney looked thoughtful. "Poor lad, I 'm afraid he is going to have a hard struggle. What can we do for him?"

"I don't know," replied honest David with a little vexation. "If he could"— He looked over at Ruth and didn't finish the sentence. "At any rate I - don't see but that we did the best thing under the circumstances. If we'd driven up here we 'd been caught, sure. Do you think we did right to avoid capture, mother?"

David always left the perplexing questions to his mother, feeling unbounded confidence in her wisdom.

"Well, now," replied Mrs. Sidney smiling, "I should never try to run away myself if a sheriff's posse was after me on a charge of stealing."

"Is that your answer, mother?"

"Yes ; isn't it plain?"

"But do you think I did wrong to help Carl ? "

"Of course not," put in Ruth a little indignantly.

The mother looked up and replied gently, " I can not see as any great wrong has been done. I have not the least doubt of Carl's innocence. He has become frightened at the threat of arrest. His flight will be against him unless the real thief is found, for every

one will believe him guilty because he did run away. I am sorry that such a thing has happened to the boy. It's dreadful to think of him sleeping in that desolate cellar all night. David, you must bring him over here in the morning. Perhaps we can persuade him to let us know more about the particulars. Then we might help him to clear himself of suspicion."

In the morning David started almost before light with a good breakfast in a large basket. Further talk with the mother the night before had decided him to persuade Carl to come back to the farm when they would all do everything they could for him. It was beginning to grow light very fast as David drew near the old cellar. He went around to the opening and looked down, calling Carl's name. No one answered and he went down the steps. The cellar was empty; and no Carl was to be found!

David came out and standing on the mound of dirt heaped over the cellar looked around all over the prairie. But there were no signs of a human being anywhere, and, with a strange feeling of disappointment and almost dread, David thoughtfully went back to the house wondering where Carl was, and what the outcome of all that experience would be.

The night before Christmas found Paul and Jacob in the hall at college. It was nearly twelve o'clock, for Paul's work at the store had kept him late. During the academy life at Veronda the boys had been in the habit of keeping late hours; so Paul, when he came in, was not surprised to find Jacob reading before a rousing fire in the little round stove.

"I tell you," said Paul, spreading his hands out before the fire as he sat down, this seems good. It's a bitter cold night."

"Aren't you tired standing up all day in that store?" inquired Jacob, pushing a plate of apples over where Paul could reach them.

"I don't feel so tired in my feet as I do in my mind," replied Paul, slowly paring an apple as he settled down with a sigh of content in an old armchair.

"I didn't know you used your mind so much as all that," said Jacob, with the freedom born of familiarity.

"Oh, well, just you wait till you clerk it in a big notion store during the holidays. Some of those folks make me so mad I want to tell them what I think of them. Why, there was one of them bought a little woolly dog yesterday for thirteen cents, and today she brought it back and complained that one of its ears was missing and could she exchange it for a bottle of cologne."

"What did you do?" inquired Jacob gravely.

"Oh, I gave her the cologne, of course. I only mention it as one instance out of a thousand like it."

"I shouldn't think that was much to complain about. That dog's bark was worse than its bite, I should say."

Paul looked over at Jacob and broke out into a merry laugh as he caught his meaning. "You're right, old man. I'm ashamed of myself. At this time of the year, too. And I've seen some pleasant things done in that store. Only I don't think it improves the temper to

clerk it in a notion store during the holidays. The rush for presents at this one time of the year seems like a great undignified scramble as if all that Christmas means to the majority of people is getting something for their friends. Don't you think people are forgetting what the day really means to the world?"

"What does it mean to you?" asked Jacob, even more slowly than usual.

Paul had never talked on religious topics with Jacob, but the subject seemed to open before them naturally. A clock in the city struck twelve just as Jacob asked the question. Paul waited until the last stroke had sounded. Then he replied thoughtfully, as he munched his apple, "My mother could tell you better what the day ought to be to everybody. I wish she was here."

"That reminds me," exclaimed Jacob; "a letter came for you this evening." He got up, went over to the shelf where letters were always laid, and tossed one into Paul's lap.

Paul picked it up and glanced at the direction. "From mother, Ruth and David I guess, by the size of it. Excuse me while I read, old fellow, will you?"

He tore open the letter, and was soon absorbed in its contents.

He had almost finished the first few pages, which were from his mother, when he chanced to glance up and caught Jacob looking across the table at him in such a hungry wistful way, that Paul's heart went out towards his plain, awkward, queer chum as he remembered that he had no home, no mother living

and no particular friends or relatives.

"Say, Jacob, would you mind if I read the letters aloud?"

Jacob's face brightened and his eye glistened. "I would enjoy it, you know. You remember I used to like to hear your mother's letters."

"All right, I'll go back and begin with hers. This is a combination letter. Mother writes first, then David, then Ruth. Mother says, A merry Christmas to you, dear lad.' Mother thinks I am just a little boy still," put in Paul, parenthetically, by way of explanation. We have tried to imagine how you are situated in the college hall, but we don't succeed very well, as that last drawing you made of the room and sent us was a little confusing. We didn't know whether you had a three-legged rockingchair to sleep in or whether it was intended as a drawing of a new city style of hatrack and bureau combined.

"That's only a piece of mother's fun," grinned Paul as he went on.

But at any rate we are glad to hear that you are entirely well of your Veronda illness, and that you are able to keep up your studies and enjoy your college life in spite of your unfortunate roommate. That is, unfortunate for you. Do you think he can be influenced in any way by you? Don't forget that daily life is what counts in the long run. It may be for a good purpose that you are thrown together. At least I hope you will remember, my dear son, that you maybe the means of bringing him to look upon religion in an altogether different light. I am praying for you every day as I lie here and think of your

meeting new temptations and passing through novel experiences. I have great faith that you will grow up into a very bighearted nobleminded Christian gentleman and will win many great battles over yourself for Christ's sake.

We are going to spend Christmas here at home as usual. We have invited the Peterson children to come over in the evening and we shall have games and old-fashioned pop com, and candy, the homemade kind that is so good when it doesn't stick to the plates like liquid glue and necessitate breaking the dishes to get it off. It has been a bitter cold winter so far and we have hard work to keep warm. David went over the entire house and chinked it with fresh mortar in the early fall, else I don't know what we should do this winter. He has had one or two severe experiences in going after wood, but I am very thankful that so far he has not been caught out in any of the blizzards. We have had two already, but none so severe as the one when you and David found Carl. Poor boy! We have not heard a thing of him since the time of which we wrote you, when he appeared so unexpectedly and David took him over to Grice's cyclone cellar. I have prayed for him daily. I have a heartache for the boy, so homeless and unfortunate. I can not help feeling that we shall see him again sometime. David misses his help on the farm. He has got along by hiring and by doing work in exchange, but he does an immense amount of work alone. He is blessed with very good health and is very strong, else I should fear for him.

Ruth grows more helpful every day. She is one of the

best girls a mother ever had. Some day the Lord will open the way for her to go to school. We are reading Sir Walter Scott's works together this winter. Ruth reads aloud. She has finished „The Talisman" and "Guy Mannering" already. We look up historical references as we go along and have enjoyed it very much. I use the atlas to pick out places, and David brings out his histories, while all of us correct mispronounced words. You remember that winter, Paul, when you read the entire list of Scott's stories. It was a hard winter for any of us to get anything out of you in the way of a pail of water or an armful of wood, but I am glad you took to the books so keenly. You will always be benefited by the relish you then gained for the better class of stories. You know I have always taught you, and have always believed, that when there is a craving for fiction, it ought to be met at once with the very best to be had, and not discouraged by trying to cultivate a taste for history or science instead. I am sure you do not care for trashy fiction. You acquired too strong a taste for something better.

Christmas will not seem like Christmas to us without you. This makes three times we have missed you. I hope the box we sent three days ago has reached you by this time. I know how crowded the mails get at this season and asked David to send it off early. Ruth will explain her gift. I will simply say for mine that it is but a small expression of my love for you. But it has been a great joy to me to work on it as I lie here, so useless in many ways, and yet feeling that my children believe me to be worth a

little still.

We don't know what sort of a Christmas you will have or whether any one will invite you out. It will be lonesome for you, perhaps, but you may be able to make the day a happy one for some poor child. The city unist contain some souls in great need. It has seemed to me during my prayers that the best Christmas a mortal could have would be one spent in ministering to some hungry soul, hungry in body, or mind, or spirit, and leaving it happier and more at peace than ever before. This is the meaning of Christmas, sacrifice, unselfishness, Christlikeness. This is the meaning of that first great Christmas Day - giving not simply some earthly gift to a friend, or even to the poor and needy, but giving of ourselves to God. It will always seem to me that the meaning of the day is lost sight of, unless each succeeding generation of men is more and more impressed with the great lesson that Christmas means the giving of self to God, that He may make use of it for the glory of his kingdom.

Pardon the little sermon, Paul. You know how your mother feels. Every time she writes she thinks it may be the last time. I do not want to make this season of the year sad to you, but you know I have taught you not to be too much afraid of death or the thought of death. When I die, that is, my body, I do not wish you to mourn too violently, but simply to remember how happy I am with something so much better than this poor weak worn-out body of mine. I only care to live now for the sake of my children. I do want to live long enough to see them grow up into lives of strong

usefulness in the kingdom of God on earth, bowing down to no man as master, acknowledging no one as such except Christ. I hope they will leave an influence behind them which will be a satisfaction to look back upon when they stand with Christ in heaven.

You know we all send most abundant love. When we write, remember us always to Jacob. It will be pleasant if he decides to go to college with you when, he is through at Veronda. We shall never forget what he did for you in your illness, and we all join in wishing him also a Merry Christmas.

Your loving Mother."

"There," said Paul, after a little pause. "I'm glad mother remembered you. She would, anyway. So they haven't got my letter telling about your being here! David says — shall I read on? Do you want to hear the others?"

Paul looked up as he asked the question, and Jacob replied with a slight huskiness in his tone, "Yes - go on - I - it does me good. My mother died four years ago this winter. She died in an insane asylum. She did not know me when I went to see her"

Paul was shocked. Jacob had always been very reticent about his family matters. For the first time in his life Paul felt what a blessing it was to have a mother like his, and he did not know what to say to the plain figure across the table. He was quiet a minute. Then he said gently, "Tell me about it some time, won't you, old man?"

"Yes - sometime."

There was another pause. Then Paul read on.

"Dear Brother, - Mother is such a capital hand at telling the news, and she has such an advantage in writing first, that you can't expect anything great from me. Besides, you know, I don't take to letter writing as much as some young men do. Ruth says it's because I never have had a girl to write to. When I do, she says I will improve in this respect. Maybe I will, but it's a good ways off. The farm is in good shape this winter, and the stock are doing finely. We had seven hundred bushels of corn off the fifteen acre piece you helped break. I believe I told you about what a time I had getting the first load to town. I got stuck in the gully the other side of Peterson's, and didn't know but I'd lose one of the horses; but by cutting the harness all to pieces I got them out and saved them.

We had a lovely fall, but when winter started in, it came a running, and has been bitter cold ever since. We keep the fires going pretty strong, though the green cottonwood is the meanest wood in all creation to burn. An icicle would give about as much heat. We are hoping that you will have a happy Christmas somewhere. I suppose most of the fellows have gone home. You must miss your sweet little roommate at this season of the year. I should think from what you write about him that he is troubled with the big head. I'd like to have him out here on the farm a month, hitching up the balky mules or milking your favorite cow, which still lives to kick the bucket.

Well, a merry Christmas to you. Why don't you try to get up to Veronda during the vacation and have a visit with your old chum Jacob ? Wouldn't you enjoy it, or can't you spare the time to go, or the cash? I wish I had a hundred dollars to give you, but we had to pay interest again in December, you know, and I can't spare any just now. Keep well, and don't break down.

Your affectionate brother,
David."

"I believe I would like your brother if I knew him better," remarked Jacob, as Paul finished.

"Of course. He 's a splendid fellow, David is."

"Did n't he ever want to go to college?" asked Jacob.

"Oh, no!" replied Paul, in all innocence of David's secret. "David never cared anything about college. He's fond of the farm life. Likes it. Ruth says, — shall I go on ? Do you care to hear?"

"Why, of course. I never had any sisters. What are they like?" asked Jacob soberly.

Paul stared. "Like? Why it depends. Ruth is one of the likely kind. She is smart."

"Is she smarter than the boys of the family?" inquired Jacob.

"Oh, get out! Let me read the letter. Then you'll know, old man! She says: -

Dear Paul, - We all send Merry Christmas, though we don't see how you are going to have it away off there all alone in your college room, without any of

the Christmas things around you that we have always had at home. Will you hang up your stocking, or what will you do? Mother thinks that if you wear out stockings the way you used to, you probably haven't a pair now without holes big enough to let an orange or a bag of pop corn fall through. She says she hopes you have learned by this time how to darn them and don't imitate the college boy who used to gather up the edges of the holes and tie them with a string.

Mother told you about our studying Scott this winter, but she didn't say anything about the course that David and I have been taking together. We thought the long winter evenings on a farm must be made for some good purpose, and early in the fall we mapped out a little course in history and literature. We are trying to keep up with present history, too, and twice a week mother gives us the news of the day. The Petersons, who have been good neighbors to us, take a semiweekly paper through a club which David and the farmers about here have joined. So we try to keep in touch with the world, and when you graduate and come out to see us, a learned man, we hope you won't be too much ashamed of your country relatives. We still know who is President of the United States' and that Columbus discovered us in 1492. We won't disgrace you very badly if we do farm it for a living. I have sent you a box for pens and ink and postage stamps. I thought I would tell you what it was for so that you would n't be using it for a burnt match holder or a card receiver. You must keep your writing materials neatly in it.

You will find a penwiper in the bottom of the box, and you mustn't use it for a stove holder. Maybe you think I 'm particular, but I have been reading about the perplexity of a young man in discovering the use of some of the Christmas presents sent him by a young lady, and I don't want you to be embarrassed over mine. It would be nice for you, wouldn't it? Your Veronda chum, Jacob Wendell, could be with you at Christmas time. But I suppose he has to finish his year in the academy. David told us he wasn't particularly handsome, but" —

Paul turned scarlet and stopped. He had read on without thinking that Jacob sat right opposite.

"Well, why don't you go on ?" asked Jacob.

"The best part of the sentence is the last part of it, I guess."

Paul hurriedly continued: —

„Not particularly handsome, but one of the most beautiful characters he ever saw."

„I told you so," said Jacob, without a particle of resentment or offended feeling in his tone. "That's what I call a compliment."

Paul looked at his old chum in admiration, and read on a little more slowly, so as to skip the embarrassing passages, if any more appeared.

I hope when he graduates from Veronda he will come down and room with you in college. It must be hard for you to get along with that Barton. Did you say he was a handsome fellow ? We all think Jacob Wendell is worth a hundred of him. We don't forget that he saved your life, and some time we all hope we can see

him and thank him for it."

Paul didn't see Jacob's face. But for a moment a glow lighted it up so that it was almost handsome. Poor fellow! When, one evening, two years after, he told Paul his history, Paul did not wonder at the hungry yearning of the man for home affection.

Ruth finished her letter by giving her brother good sisterly advice about keeping well. He folded up the letters and jumping up exclaimed,

" Well, it's late, old man. Why, it's Merry Christmas already ! Merry Christmas ! Jacob."

He reached across the table and the two shook hands hard and long.

The next morning dawned sharp and cold; a gray sky and a frosty rime in the air. Paul had to go into the store for the forenoon; then it closed up for the day. He and Jacob planned to take the afternoon off and go to a musical matinee given by one of the most famous choruses in the east. Jacob was passionately fond of music, and it was also a great treat to Paul. Between them they had money enough to purchase balcony seats and were anticipating the music with much relish.

But when Paul was on his way back to his room that day he passed by the Rock Tenements. They were high, gloomy apartments of wood, surrounded by narrow courts and alleys. The sight of three ragged children in a doorway playing at having a Christmas tree (one of them trying to stick a piece of evergreen into the crack of a big stone in the alley) impressed Paul with a feeling of sadness so deep and a longing so great that when he reached the room he spoke of

it to Jacob and wondered if they couldn't do something to give those children a happy Christmas. He thought of what his mother had written: "This is the meaning of Christmas, sacrifice, unselfishness, Christlikeness."

Jacob thought a moment. Then he said, "How much money have you got?"

"Two dollars and a half in hard cash. How is your bank account, old man?"

"My assets are \$3.25, and my liabilities \$1.25," replied Jacob, pouring a lot of loose change on the table.

"That makes a combined capital of \$4.50," said Paul gravely. "I'm sure that would buy something."

"Our tickets to the matinee will cost a dollar," suggested Jacob.

"We might give that to the cause," suggested Paul. Jacob was silent a moment. Then he said, and Paul understood his sacrifice better two years afterward, "All right. Let's do it. I've got a plan. It will take all the afternoon to get it ready."

They talked together eagerly for half an hour, then went down into the city and dined at a cheap restaurant and during the afternoon found two or three places still open where candy and cheap toys could be bought. At a fancy costume store Jacob hired two Santa Claus beards and masks. Paul happened to think that one of the janitors in college had an old fur coat. They borrowed that, and it covered Jacob up completely.

The Rook Tenements at the time of this story were the shame and disgrace of one of our big cities. They

were not only unsafe buildings, but horrible dens of filth, vice and crime. Yet Paul knew that in those reeking rooms lived honest workingmen with their families, struggling against every possible obstacle in the endeavor to make a living.

It was not without some little misgiving that the two young men set out on their errand of good will. The night was stormy. The sleet and snow sifted off the big houses and drove against the electric lights in wreaths of fine, angry rage, at not being able to blow them out.

At Jacob's suggestion a police officer whose beat was on the Rook Tenement district was asked to go with them. Paul explained their errand, and the officer, who at first seemed more inclined to arrest them for some kind of deviltry, at last yielded and agreed to accompany them after getting permission from headquarters, close by. He grinned at the sight of Jacob's beard and mask, and when Paul put his on in the light of a corner lamp Officer Murphy laughed silently and said, "Come on then. Ye'll need me to protect ye with them phazes on yez."

They climbed up three flights of stairs in the first section of the block, and knocked at the door, where the officer said a sick woman was being cared for by a daughter who worked in one of the clothing houses of the city.

" Bedad! They've had a hard time. Jim was on the force and was kilt last spring during the big Kirk fire by a wall crushin' him. An' there's two little children besides."

A feeble voice said, " Come in."

Officer Murphy stepped in first. " Good evenin' to you, Mrs. Brady. An' how are ye tonight ? Merry Christmas to yez !"

"I 'm ailin badly tonight, Mr. Murphy. I 've seen poor Jim's wraith twice, and the next time I see it I shall die."

"O, die nothing! Mrs. Brady. Wait till you see a couple of Santa Clauses I picked up for yez, and then die a laughin.' Come in, you Siamese twins, now!" he called to Paul and Jacob who stepped into the dimly lighted room with their bundles on their backs.

" Merry Christmas!" said Paul cheerfully.

" Merry Christmas!" echoed Jacob through his mask, while the poor woman stared in astonishment, and the two smaller children, one of whom Paul recognized as the child he had seen at noon in the alley, crept up to them and stood looking in big-eyed wonder.

" You see, ma'am," said Paul, " this is my brother, Mr. Santa Claus. The world is so full of needy people these days that I have had to help him out with his job. This is the first season that we have traveled together this way, but if business grows as it's been doing lately the whole Santa Claus family will have to go along. Isn't that so, brother ? "

"Indeed it is, mum," said Jacob, whose voice sounded very queer in the mask. " We've come all the way from the north pole just to see ye. And we 've got something for the children. Brother, help me unload my pack. Ah! I'm out o' breath traveling so fast."

Paul took Jacob's bundle down and gave a doll to the girl and a bag of candy and an orange to the boy. He laid a picture card on the bed for the mother, and before the family could recover from their astonishment he beckoned to officer Murphy and the young men went out. Their hearts ached to do more, but it was impossible. Yet into the squalid room went a ray from Judaea's heaven-lit plain where the angels sang their song and all the earth rejoiced at its first Christmas gift.

It would be too long a story to tell of all the rooms visited by the two Santa Clauses that night. It was well they had asked Mr. Murphy to go along with them. The excitement caused by their advent into one room was so great that a mob of young boys threatened to follow them all through the block if the officer had not ordered them to keep at a distance.

"Git away wid yez now," said Mr. Murphy, making a significant flourish with his club. "If you go to making any disturbance, the Santa Clauses will turn into rid hot divils, an' carry yez off to purgatory on a rid hot stove lid."

This was sufficient to prevent any serious disturbance. Paul and Jacob saw rooms and sights that evening that made their young hearts throb with pity and anger. When their bundles were almost gone they had not been through a tenth part of that great nest of despair and corruption.

They had climbed up four rickety flights along towards the last and knocked at a battered door without getting any response. There was a light

glimmering under the door and the officer gently lifted the latch and peered in. He looked at something a long time then beckoned the young men in a whisper to follow him. " Better take off your phazes here," he said, a little gruffly, they thought. They pulled off their masks and stepped in behind the officer. It was a sight they did not forget to their dying day. On a rickety table in the middle of the room was placed a plain deal coffin, in which lay a child. A woman was at one end of the table with her head resting on her arms and a man was sitting by the rusty broken stove, which had a little fire in it. He sat in such an attitude of dejection that although they could not see his face the visitors knew how it looked as well as if it had been painted by a master upon the wall opposite.

No one said anything for a minute. The officer touched the man on the shoulder. He slowly lifted his head and looked in troubled amazement at the policeman.

"Was it your only child?"

"Yes!" sobbed the man. "Our first born, O God!"

He bent his head down again upon his knees. The woman did not stir or weep.

Paul and Jacob stood awestruck and tearful. Then Jacob took a few flowers (the remaining bouquet of two they had purchased), and laid them gently on the child's breast. Then to Paul's surprise he stepped up to the woman and bending down, said solemnly, "Your child is safe in the arms of a loving God!"

This time the woman lifted her eyes, looked at the child passionately, saw the flowers there, and then

throwing her head down on her arms again, sobbed as if her heart would break.

Officer Murphy dashed his hand across his eyes and retired hastily into the landing, where he blew his nose.

The boys waited a minute. Then feeling powerless in the presence of such misery, they went softly and reverently out, downstairs, and out into the storm again. They had no more presents to distribute, and after thanking officer Murphy, they went thoughtfully up to their room in the hall. As they crossed over by the big open square to climb the hill to the college buildings the people were just coming out of the theatre, laughing, talking and commenting on the great tragedy they had just been seeing as acted by the famous Salvini.

"The great tragedy has not been in there tonight," said Paul, whose eyes were still wet and glistening.

"No, it is going on all the time in the Rook Tenements," answered Jacob.

O humanity! humanity! When shall the Christian world give to thee in the name of Christ the attention thou dost need! And why will men and women weep, and smile, and feel the thrill of interest in the mimic play of passion, when all about, the human heart presents a stage whereon the real play is being enacted, and life and immortality are at stake in the result? And, oh, the blessed Christmas time! Come to our hearts, thou Child Jesus, and reveal more of thy love to us and make us all more willing to be used for the good of others.

Vacation was over and the hall was filled with the

usual noise and interchange of greeting common after the holidays. Paul happened to be away down town when Barton returned. Jacob was in the room when Barton came along the hall way and hastily threw open the door. Jacob was sitting by the stove with his back to the door. Barton paused a minute, and then exclaimed in a supercilious tone, " And who are you ? "

Jacob turned his head slowly, and without saying a word looked at him.

CHAPTER IX.

A COLLEGE BANQUET.

Jacob looked at Barton good-naturedly for a few seconds and replied in answer to his question, „And who are you? " by saying mildly, " Oh, I 'm only one of Sidney's friends. Can I do anything for you?"

"No, I don't know as you can," replied Barton after staring at Jacob and trying to put him out of countenance.

Jacob returned the look very steadily and did not seem in the least embarrassed.

" Where is Sidney? " asked Barton, after an awkward pause.

"Down town. He said he 'd be back in half an hour." Barton growled out something about taking care of one's own business and proceeded to unpack his valise.

As he threw his things out on his bed Jacob inquired, "Say, what 'll you take for your share of the room?"

"Don't want to sell," snapped out Barton.

"The reason I asked," said Jacob, "was because Paul used to be my roommate at Veronda and I would like to room with him here."

Barton looked over at the plain face of the speaker and said with a little sneer, "You must be very fond of each other."

"We are," replied Jacob quietly. "That's the reason we would like to room together. Will you sell out?"

"No; I 'm well fixed and don't like the bother of moving."

"Well, if you sell out you won't have to move out anything but yourself, you know."

Jacob said it without the least intention of being understood as rude or insolent.

Barton did not know him, and his face grew white with passion at what he supposed was meant for an insult. He had evidently come back from his vacation in a very ill humor and was ready to quarrel on slight provocation. He stepped up to Jacob and said, "You miserable little freshman, you get out of this room!"

Jacob did not rise from his chair and did not seem in the least surprised or frightened. He simply asked, "Am I sitting in one of your chairs or getting in your way?"

Barton had actually put out his hand to pull Jacob from his chair, when the door opened and in walked Paul.

Paul stopped, not seeing just how matters stood.

Jacob rose, and walking around the end of the table

spoke to Paul. "Say, Paul, introduce me to your roommate, will you? It's a little awkward to spend so long a time without an introduction."

"Mr. Barton, this is my old Veronda friend, Jacob Wendell," said Paul stiffly.

"Glad to meet you, Mr. Barton," said Jacob putting out his hand.

The action was so entirely free from ill feeling and offence, that Barton would have been a good deal worse than he was if he had attempted to refuse. He shook hands coldly and without a word turned to his unpacking.

Paul never felt so uncomfortable in all his life. He was sure Barton had insulted Jacob in some way but just how he could not tell. Jacob went to the window and looked down into the quadrangle, the least concerned of any body. But Paul had made up his mind as to what he would do when Barton came back and he thought he might as well begin at once.

" Barton," he said, as quietly as possible, " my old chum here has unexpectedly come down to college and as we were together up at Veronda we would enjoy rooming together here. We have talked it over this vacation, and have been wondering if you would be willing to sell your half of the room at a fair price."

"I've said I don't care to sell," replied Barton shortly.

"Then would you be willing to buy my half, and Jacob and I will go out and find a room somewhere?"

" I haven't anything to spend on such a bargain," said Barton, who evidently was hard up after three weeks of dissipation.

Paul began to get angry. He had a quick temper, and

his only control over it was due to the thought of the mother at home, lying there pale and suffering, and praying for him. He choked down his passion and waited a minute. Then he spoke again.

" If you won't sell out, or buy me out, of course you can't complain if I take my things and move them into another room. I can't afford to buy two sets of furniture."

" You can do what you're a mind to," replied Barton sullenly. "One thing 's sure, I don't sell nor buy. I've got only one year more in the old college and I don't want to be bothered. If you move out your half it'll be a mighty sneaking ungentlemanly thing to do, that's all I say."

Paul boiled over. He would have said something to be sorry for if Jacob had not turned from the window, and said, " Come out into the hall, Paul, I want to say something."

He let Jacob take him by the arm and the two went down into the quadrangle and had a long talk together. At the end of it they decided that for the present Jacob would get a room somewhere else, and Paul would stay with Barton. Various reasons led to this decision. Jacob urged in his slow but decided fashion, that inasmuch as Barton would not buy Paul out he could not afford to get half of a new room elsewhere. And if he took his share of furnishings and moved them into an empty room, in case one could be found. Barton would consider the act as a mean and sneaking thing — without just reason, but nevertheless he would thus consider it. The fact was that Paul's purchase included a great

many things that were indispensable to Barton's comfort. If he insisted on his strict legal rights, as occasionally college boys had done, and took out half his own things as he had paid for them, it would look like taking an advantage, and a boy like Barton would not hesitate to call it a mean advantage, although the meanness would be all on his own side. Paul felt keenly the difference between Jacob and Barton for roommates and bitterly thought of all the disagreeable experiences of the past term. But on the other hand the words of his mother's letter occurred to him, and he wondered if he could have any influence for good over his disagreeable roommate. He reluctantly consented to Jacob's suggestion, and went back to his room and began the term as if Jacob had not come. Jacob succeeded in getting a room in the same hall, so that the two friends saw each other every day.

Barton asked no questions, but as the days went by and Paul made no move, and no mention of his old roommate, he grew a little less sullen.

It was at this time that Paul had an experience which we will narrate.

He thought he was beginning to gain some little influence over Barton in the way of winning his respect. But there were a good many things about him that Paul disliked heartily. He swallowed a good deal, he thought, when he overlooked the noise and confusion and card playing that went on night after night. Barton was not altogether depraved. That is, he was not so lost to all sense of fairness and decency as to openly say anything further against

Paul's evening prayers. But in many other ways he seemed totally lost to all honor. Paul studied him quietly and tried to find out what his good points were. More than once he helped him out of a tight place with his mathematics, for which he was not ungrateful. But he was in with a fast set that dissipated time and strength and money at a rate perfectly awful to one of Paul's economical habits. The spring term came on with Paul no nearer Barton on the moral side than before.

It was one evening just before the Junior Burial, when the junior class burned and buried its most detestable study of the year, that Barton came up to the room in good spirits and threw down a handsome gilt invitation to one of the secret society suppers which came off on the night of the burial.

"There, Sidney, is an invitation for you! I had hard work to get it, I can tell you. You don't have any fun with your grind at the work all the time. Drop it, and come out and see the boys once; it'll do you good. Man alive, you 're getting to be as dried up and worn-out as old Conic Sections! It 's going to be a splendid banquet, and some funny speeches and all, the one open meeting of all the year, you know. So come along, won't you? and enjoy yourself."

"I don't know but I will; I feel a little dull nowadays," replied Paul with hesitation. He knew a little about some of the banquets from hearsay that wine was freely drunk and all that; but he had studied hard all winter; his outside work had been excessive, and he thought it would not be any great harm to attend the

banquet. He reasoned with himself that he need not drink any wine, if it was on the table; and then Barton had gone to the trouble of getting a ticket, and it would be an ungracious thing to refuse the invitation. Paul had been trying so long to get on comfortable terms with him that he had better go, and no harm would be done. Paul was in that restless, uneasy condition caused by overwork and anxiety and monotony, where almost every young man finds himself once in a while, when there is a craving for something new and exciting.

“I’m tired of being so good all the time,” Paul muttered to himself. Thousands of young men have said the same thing in moments of depression or of restlessness, and then rushed into the mouth of hell as if that was any relief, but only to find that the restlessness of sin is tenfold worse than the uneasiness which springs from patient work in monotonous goodness.

So Paul accepted the ticket and went. He hired a dress suit to be in the style, and when the hour came he sat down in one of the private dining rooms of a big hotel to the finest banquet or spread he had ever attended. Barton introduced him to two or three men who sat next to him and he was quite pleased at the gracious air with which they received him. At first he felt disposed to enjoy the evening as a pleasant change from his usual common boarding room style. The dinner was splendidly served. The only thing he did not like was the use of wine and champagne. He did not touch his glass, and felt awkward and embarrassed when he refused several invitations to

drink. As the banquet proceeded the noise and drinking increased. Everybody began to smoke as the dishes were cleared away and calls for champagne grew more loud and frequent.

Paul began to feel decidedly uncomfortable. He was wondering if he could not in some way quietly retire without making any conspicuous movement, when the toastmaster at the head of the table struck up the first verse of a song, which, to the disgrace of the college Paul attended, was sung and had been sung for years at this particular banquet. It was a song which had been written, so tradition had it, by a drunken Frenchman in the time of Cardinal Richelieu and was dedicated very properly to the god Bacchus. Each verse began with something like — Here 's to good old beer, or good Rhein wine, or good red wine, or good old sherry, and so on for twenty or more verses.

Each one at the table, as his turn came, was by custom obliged to drain his glass and sing a verse, adding whatever nonsense he pleased. Then everybody joined in with an imitation of a drunken chorus, which by the time the song had got around the table was more real than assumed. Paul sat five seats from the toastmaster. He was aware of the custom connected with the song but he was determined neither to sing nor drink. When his time came he sat silent.

"Go on! Go on!" cried the toastmaster and others. "Perhaps he does n't know the words," suggested one of Paul's neighbors. " O say good old whiskey, brandy, gin, anything'll do!" shouted a dozen voices.

Still Paul sat quiet. His lip began to curl with scorn at himself for having come to the banquet. Barton left his place and came around to Paul and whispered to him, "Don't be a chicken. Here! here's a glass of light wine. It won't hurt you. Go on with the song. It's the custom. You needn't drink the whole glass if you don't want to."

It would be difficult to describe Paul's feelings at the moment. He lived a whole world in a few seconds. Then there flashed upon him a possible way out of it that would be neither cowardly nor unmanly.

He rose calmly and called out in a clear tone, "Mr. Toastmaster!"

Even the men who were beginning to get tipsy grew quiet a moment as Paul stood there, glass in hand. His face was a trifle pale, but not a muscle or nerve quivered.

"Mr. Toastmaster, I wish to say as one of the invited guests to this banquet, that I am not unmindful of the courtesy due from a guest to a host. But I would like to ask if instead of singing a verse of the song, as the custom is, I may propose a toast instead."

"Shertainly! the gen'in may proposh dozen an'we'll drink 'em all!" said a man just opposite Paul who had already drained a bottle of champagne.

"You may do as you please, sir," replied the toast-master, a young man who was still sober, and had some of the instincts of a gentleman.

"Then," said Paul in a clear tone, "I propose the name of my sainted mother, and may her prayers keep me from ever polluting my body with the stuff that

damns men's souls!"

With the words Paul dashed the wine glass and its contents on the floor behind him, stepped back himself, and started to go out of the room.

The toastmaster is to-day one of the best known lawyers in America. Five years afterwards, in relating the scene to a friend, he said, "The effect of that little speech and the act that followed it was twofold. On myself it was like dashing a pail of cold water over me. I made an inward resolve, which I have kept religiously, not to touch another drop of wine as long as I lived. I think several other men at the table did the same. In fact I know they did. But more than a dozen fellows were furious. After the first effect was over they yelled to the men near the door to fetch Paul back. What followed was a disgraceful affair, and one of the last of such scenes in college."

That is what the toast master said to his friend. What happened after Paul's somewhat dramatic departure from the table was this : —

Before he could reach the door half a dozen men seized him. Paul was one of the strongest men in college. Before he graduated he was by far the best developed man physically. He knocked down three men one after another, reached the door, and almost escaped, but a dozen more fellows flung themselves on him and threw him on the floor. His dress suit, hired for the occasion, was torn and ruined. Even as he lay there he thought of the time it would take him to earn the forty or fifty dollars necessary to make it good.

The men gathered in a group about him as three or

four held him prostrate. Bad blood was up, and a consultation took place concerning his punishment. "Make him drink a bottle of champagne!" yelled one of the men who had drunk deepest. The suggestion was caught up with a yell of delight. Some one snatched a bottle off the table, and without waiting to pull the cork broke the neck off by knocking it against the edge of the table, and then held it foaming over Paul while some one else tried to force his mouth open. Paul determined that he would die before he would drink a drop, and the first man that put his hand on his mouth had his finger bit to the bone. For Paul was excited and angry now. He shouted defiance at his tormentors, who were sitting on him and almost regained his feet in a desperate struggle. It was at this moment that the toastmaster and a few others began to rush in and expostulate. They pulled the men off from Paul. The disturbance now began to assume more or less the appearance of a general fracas. Chairs were overturned and broken. The waiters headed by the night watch, who happened to be in the adjoining hall way, interfered and threatened the police.

In the midst of the growing confusion Paul regained his feet, and rushed out of the hotel without his hat

or overcoat. Torn and bleeding, and soiled from head to foot, he reached his room in the hall, thoroughly sick at heart. In shame and anger mingled, throwing himself on his bed, as he used to do when a boy, he cried and sobbed and prayed, most of his words being directed to his mother, who he hoped would

forgive him for what had been wrong in the events of the night. Paul used his mother's name as another boy would use the name of God.

In all this he was sincere, and his only remorse consisted in the thought that knowing what kind of an occasion the banquet was to be he had gone to it simply because he was, or thought he was, sick of being good so long and wanted a taste of something bad. When he was actually confronted with the evil, he saw how unattractive it was to him, and nothing but the thought and use of his mother's name could have satisfied him. We are not commenting on the wisdom or folly of Paul's action; we are only stating what he did and that, with his sensitive nature, nothing less could possibly have saved him further shame.

Barton did not come back that night. In the morning Paul went over to Jacob's room, and told the story. Jacob sympathized fully, and being a very decided person he relieved Paul very much by saying that in his judgment Paul's action was justified by the circumstances.

"If it has the effect of driving the banquet song out of college, the students will owe you something of great value. It's a disgrace and shame to the institution. Of course the fellows will be down on you for it."

"They were down on me last night sure," said Paul, smiling faintly at the recollection of the moment when he was on the floor with six fellows on top of him. "Never mind, old man," continued Paul. "You'll stand by me, won't you?"

"Stand by you!" Jacob uttered the words with an

energy that almost had the effect of rapid utterance. "My God, Paul! did you know my father drove my mother insane by drink ? Is there a greater devil in all the world than alcohol ? Oh, if I had been in your place last night, by the grace of the God I worship, I would have burned the cowardly senseless fools with the lash of my mother's name! I would have told them her story as I will tell it you sometime and it would" —

Jacob almost shrieked out the last words. It was the first time Paul had ever seen him excited or enraged. The change in him was almost frightful. His plain serious face grew stern, and his eyes shot gleams of lire. Paul shrank back almost in fear. Jacob laid his head on the table and his frame shook with sobs.

Paul stepped up, laid his hand on his head, and said solemnly, " The God of my mother is the God of your mother, Jacob. May he help us both! "

" He will! he will!" Jacob replied in a muffled tone. "Leave me awhile. I am not moved in this way often, but the fire burns in me deep."

Paul went out, his own trial swallowed up in the thought of his old chum's deeper and sadder experience. From that day he added to his love for the queer character a true and honest respect for his sorrow.

The result of this whole affair was partly what Paul had anticipated. The story of the banquet and of Paul's toast leaked out, and before night the next day the college was in possession of the main facts. Then the college took sides. The majority was with Paul. He was only a freshman yet, but his class was a large

one; Paul was popular with it, and they backed him almost to a man. But the fast element in college, which at the time was influential to a certain degree, felt and expressed a bitterness which can not be understood except as we realize that vices of any kind, whether in old or young men, in college youth or in workingmen, tend to distort ideas of justice and truth. Before Paul entered the sophomore year he had enemies who had it in their power to make him feel the fact.

He had one triumph, however. The disgraceful song was never sung again. It was attempted the following year, but frowned down by the better element, and a sentiment in the college steadily grew against the use of intoxicants in society banquets. So far, the victory was with Paul.

He wrote his mother a full account of the affair, and she wrote a long letter in reply which with Jacob's sympathy helped Paul over the period of depression immediately succeeding the events of the banquet night. But Paul never forgot the experience, and the results of it followed him through his entire college course.

Barton's relation to Paul underwent something of a change before the college closed for the summer vacation. Contrary to Paul's expectation his roommate did not seem to attach much importance to the act one way or the other. He alluded to it the next morning as "something of a shindy down to dinner last night, eh!" but after that he did not refer to it. Paul could not say that any change had taken place in him. He still went with the same crowd,

smoking continually, played far into the night, and was as disagreeable in most ways as ever. Yet it seemed to Paul that something different was noticeable about him.

The summer passed without any particular event except that more than half of it was spent by Paul in earning enough to pay for the ruined dress suit. He and Jacob worked together at one of the stores in the city where a specially heavy business happened to be doing that year, and where muscle and brains were both necessary. They roomed at night up in the hall by special permission, and took their meals down town. It was a pleasant summer on the whole. Though when Paul summed up his financial account at the end of the vacation, he shrugged his shoulders and said to Jacob, " That was an expensive supper to me, old man."

"Wine suppers are apt to be," replied Jacob gravely. "You got off cheap at one dress suit and six weeks hard labor to pay for the same."

Paul sighed as he started in with his fall studies, but he was too hearty and well to feel depressed very long. He was, as we have said, very fond of all outdoor sports and excelled in them. He was one of the many applicants for admission to the football team at the beginning of the sophomore year. He had been one of the best players at Veronda and in practice games at college had attracted attention and had inducements to go on the team. But it did not seem to him wise to do so at first. This second year he felt the need of something of the sort to prevent the terrible restlessness he stiniggled against. As

usual he wrote home to his mother about it. She wrote as she had written before : —

" Dear Boy, —I don't object to your playing football, although from David's description of it, I should think sometimes it was a little rough. But I want you to do in this as in everything else — do it to the glory of God. If it can not be done to his glory you must not play. I have always taught you that everything we have and are belongs to him. We can not give him part and keep part. It all belongs to him. So if anything occurs in connection with the game where you find it impossible to serve God, or where it is necessary to the success of the game that his laws should be disobeyed, you must stop playing at once. You can play under those conditions."

Paul read the letter reverently and thoughtfully, as he always did his mother's letters. He was now entering on his twenty-second year. He was his own man. But he had not the slightest intention of acting in the football matter contrary to her wishes or express commands. He considered his mother's commands just as binding now as when he was a little boy at home. The idea of thinking otherwise never occurred to him.

So after careful deliberation Paul decided to apply for membership on the team. There were four or five fellows on it who represented the coarser element in college, but for the most part the eleven was made up of gentlemanly fellows and the game was played with fairness and won on its merits.

The great event of the fall team was a match with a college in a neighboring city. The game was

scheduled to come off on Wednesday. Nothing else was talked about for weeks previous. There was another event which caused a stir about the same time. It was the sophomore prize oration contest which was to come off on the preceding Friday night. Paul had entered for this. He had chosen for his subject, " The Aim of Athletics in a College Course." In the oration he had taken the ground that athletics were simply a means to the higher end of education in enabling the student to use his physical powers for the enlargement and vigor of his mind and heart, and that any other use of them in college was an abuse of the true aim. It was a good oration, carefully thought out and resting on sound philosophy and ethics. There was only one money prize, but it was a large one, amounting to seventy-five dollars, and Paul, whose struggle for making his way through college grew a little harder as he went along, thought of that with some desire. But he honestly felt that he entered the contest with a goodnatured desire to win that would not be embittered in the least by failure. Paul was getting an enviable reputation as a speaker. His good physique helped him. He had a clear ringing voice, talked right on in a plain manly fashion and was popular with the athletic part of the college. There were places in his oration to which he knew the boys would object, but, nevertheless, he meant to go right on and abide by the result. He read the oration over to Jacob and received his old friends advice, knowing its value.

So with these two events coming on, the speaking on Friday and the football game scheduled for the

Wednesday of the next week, let us leave Paul for a look at the farm and the residents of the log house. The summer had been fairly successful again for David. Crops had been good and he had been able to pay another installment on the mortgage. He sighed as he paid it to think that there were nine hundred dollars still to be earned at the hard farm work before the place would be free from all burden. David was twenty-four now, thick-set, muscular, reticent, bearded. The only thing that made existence endurable for him on the farm was the thought of his mother and Ruth. He had dreams of doing great things some day after the mortgage was paid off and he had a fair running chance. As long as that burden hung over him he dared not do anything else but slave with all his might to lift it.

The autumn glory of the prairies was with them again. Day after day the sun arose into a clear crisp morning, fragrant with aromatic dew. The heavens were filled with the most glorious mellow light at noon, and night came very gently to the earth as day slipped into twilight, and twilight into gloom, and gloom into a darkness free from clouds or wind.

At the close of one such day, Ruth came to the door and called to David, who five minutes before had been in the barn yard unhitching the horses from the wagon. He had been at work hauling grain all day.

Ruth called out through the twilight, "David! David! mother wants you immediately!"

Ruth had grown into a woman, strong, reliant, beautiful. The lonely log house had grown a rich

plant.

David did not answer, and Ruth went back to her Mother.

Mrs. Sidney asked if he were coming in and Ruth said she thought so. He had not replied. They waited a few minutes. Then Mrs. Sidney called to Ruth, who had risen to light the lamp. Her voice had a peculiar sound.

"Ruth, dear, I feel a strange numbness coming over me. Won't you call David?"

Ruth, with a terror new to her brave heart, rushed out to the barn yard calling David's name. To her surprise the team was gone and David was not there. The prairie was a vast solitude and God seemed to Ruth to be a great way off.

CHAPTER X.

THE PRIZE DECLAMATION.

The Sophomore Prize Declamation at the famous college was one of the events of the college year. The chapel was filled with the undergraduates and their friends, and the faculty generally attended in a body. Paul was a little nervous. He could not help thinking of the time in the academy when he had forgotten his oration. But nearly three years had gone by since then, and he had grown more reliant. Besides he was so filled with his subject this time that he had little fear of forgetting, and even if he did, he knew that he could go on extemporaneously.

There were six contestants in all. They came on in speaking order by lot, and this time Paul's place was last. It was not considered a good position on the program, and there was a feeling among the speakers on this contest that there was little hope that the last speaker could get the prize. There had been a careful record kept of the results of the speaking for more than forty years and in all that time only three men had taken the prize whose names were last on the list.

Paul knew this and he knew also that judges are mortal and liable to err in their decision. He had seen cases already in the academy and college where mistakes had been made. But Paul was growing away from the narrow thought of success that counts defeat to consist in failure to win the money in a contest. He therefore determined to do his best without any thought of results.

As he mounted the platform, he had a moment of stage fright, but it passed away the minute he began to speak, and as he continued he found himself in a glow of effort which was the first indication he had ever had of the peculiar pleasure enjoyed by public speakers when there is freedom of thought and utterance.

One of the first faces he noticed in the audience was the face of the master, who had come to the city on some business connected with the academy and had been visiting the college during the afternoon. Paul did not know that he was in the city, and his appearance in the hall that night was a complete surprise to him. It gave him new inspiration, and he

felt a desire to do honor to the old school and the little master whom he loved and respected so highly. Paul's oration was a surprise to the faculty and students. The one passage in it which will bear quoting was as follows:

The athletic spirit in academies and colleges of these times has grown out of proportion to other things. Education means a well developed man; one who is symmetrical. Colleges ought not to turn out hobbyists as such, or cranks as such, or athletes as such. Yet the tendency of the modern college seems to be to turn out professional runners, baseball players, football teams, high jumpers, crack pitchers, scientific boxers and fast oarsmen. The colleges are developing more and more the physical out of due proportion to the intellectual. The most popular men in an institution of learning are the members of a successful team. The whole country knows the names, ages, weight and appearance of these men. The public does not know nor care very much about the man who has studied hard all junior term and won the Carleton prize for the best English essay. The athletic spirit absorbs and swallows the interest of a college to the damage of the other and higher part of a student. For certainly a man who can speak and write splendid English or who has a thorough and useful knowledge of the causes that led to the founding of this republic is a better educated man than he who can throw a heavy hammer forty-five feet or break the record at a hundred yard dash. If the man can throw the hammer or win the race and also excel in the intellectual arena well and good.

But if he can not achieve success in both, certainly the intellectual is to be preferred. As it is now, the athletic students get nearly all the notice, all the popularity, and all the praise of a college.

This is a mistake. We need to put athletics in its proper place. Its aim in a school ought to be simply to make possible a better developed education on the part of the student. This is what we are all after - a full, symmetrical, well-balanced manhood, not abnormally drawn out, but well-proportioned and true to the standard of the best education known to the race. As it is now we are in danger of losing this aim. We have lost it very largely.

The last football game played between this college and our rival was a disgrace to Christian educational institutions. In the first place, it was played on a national religious holiday at an hour that conflicted with all the Christian church services, some of which had to close on account of the noise and disturbance caused by the game. This was a disgraceful abuse of the day and a direct insult to the observance of the day so far as it had a religious significance. In the second place, the amount of betting on the game was enormous, reaching thousands of dollars, and the scenes that followed the game were such as no intelligent student could look upon with pride.

Betting is only one form of gambling. It is an attempt to get something for nothing. It is unchristian in spirit and demoralizing in practice. In an age that spends the enormous sum of \$400,000,000 a year in the pools of race courses in this country (my authority is the New York Sun) it is an alarming sight

to see a thousand men, attending two Christian colleges, indulging in the same practice of gambling over the athletic contest.

Nothing else in a college course will produce so much that is demoralizing as the abuse of the athletic spirit. Our colleges are growing wild over it. They are pushing it beyond its right limits. They are offering inducements to physical strength and skill which discourage those men who wish to excel in mental power. It is time a protest was uttered by those who have an influence in this matter. The gymnasium and the ball ground have their proper place in college, the same as the chapel and the lecture room, but I contend that they ought not to have the first place or the most important place. The true aim of the athletic spirit in college is to assist the whole development of the Christian education of a full-rounded, well-proportioned man. When athletics ignore this aim or insist on more than is fair of a student's time and interest, then they cease to do the work intended of them in a college and will demoralize manhood instead of developing it.

It took all of Paul's popularity with the college to make this part of his oration go down with the students. When he mentioned the playing of the colleges on Thanksgiving day, and went on to speak of the gambling there was a hiss from several parts of the hall. Men of Barton's stamp were indignant. But there was another element in the college that responded to Paul's honest plain statement, and a clapping of hands arose that drowned the hisses. Paul was conscious as he stood waiting a minute for

the applause to subside, that no one in the hall was clapping more vigorously than the little master. Paul was pleased enough with that, and finished his speech with a fine burst of eloquence that carried the audience with him. When he walked off the platform the applause again burst out in greater and larger volume than had greeted any of the other speakers.

The period between the speaking and the announcement by the judges is a painful one for audience and contestants. It ended at last and the chairman, being one of the most sensible of men, came forward and without any little speech which nobody wanted to hear simply said, "The judges award the prize of this contest to Mr. Paul Sidney."

Paul went up on the platform calmly enough, although his heart beat quickly. His first thought was of his mother. How glad she would be of his success! The audience cheered as he came down again, and his class crowded around to shake hands and congratulate. The little master came up and said, "Well, Paul, you did the old school honor. What you said was very timely, I 'm glad my boys, some of them, have the true idea of oratory, which is to persuade men to higher thinking and living."

That did Paul good. He flushed and felt prouder at that than of anything else that was said to him.

The dignified president came up and extended congratulations and nearly all the faculty followed. Paul was in danger of having his head turned. At last the most enthusiastic of the class caught him up and carried him to his room and left him there.

But there was a little bitterness awaiting Paul's

triumph. He had sat down by the table to think it all over, and had just opened the envelope containing the seventy-live dollars, all in crisp new fives, when Barton and Jacob came in. Jacob had been among the crowd following Paul up into the hall, and had then gone to his room to get a book that Paul wanted for the next morning's lectures. He happened to reach the door at the same time with Barton and came in with him.

Barton had a sullen air that Paul knew quite well. Paul determined to ignore it and turned to Jacob, "Well, old man, this has been a surprise to me."

"Very pleasant one," said Jacob, who was intensely delighted, although nobody could ever suppose so from his appearance. "Yours was the best oration though. It had an aim and when you fired it off it hit something."

Barton loolced over with a sneer. His disagreeable manner had never seemed so offensive to Paul as it did tonight.

" It was a mighty sneaking, contemptible thing to call up the Thanksgiving game and all that preaching truck about gambling. There 's more than one fellow in college considers it a direct insult, I can tell you!"

Paul bit his lips but said nothing. He had learned that the best way to keep from having a quarrel with Barton was generally to say nothing.

Jacob, however, looked over at Barton and said slowly, "What do you feel insulted about? the preaching or the gambling?"

"Gambling, nothing! I tell you there is a crowd here that won't stand more such nonsense from any

toadying Sundayschool whining reformers, who lug into this contest things that belong to the church rather than to college."

"I suppose you and your friends go to Sundayschool so frequently that you are dead sick of preaching and that's the reason you object to it in college," drawled Jacob mildly.

Barton looked at Jacob savagely and began to swear. Then he began to say something about Jacob's Sunday-school habits and sneeringly went on to speak of his being tied to his mother's apron strings. Until he mentioned his mother, Jacob stood coolly by the table eying Barton with a look of indifferent disgust that had its reason in a deep-seated abhorrence of the fast man's record and character in college. The minute he spoke of his mother, however, Jacob changed his appearance in a lightning-like second. He bounded over to the astonished Barton, seized him by the throat and shook him as a dog shakes a rat, while he almost screamed, "You miserable, useless waster of the soul that God gave you to expend for his glory, if you speak of my sainted mother with a sneer like that I will throw you downstairs with as little compunction as I would throw a bag of dirty clothes!"

There was a savage energy and power about the action and the word that actually frightened Barton. He was a bully, and bullies are apt to be cowards. Jacob let go of him, and without saying another word walked out of the room and left Paul and Barton dazed by the transformation that had come over him.

Barton shook himself together and said with a little laugh, that betrayed how thoroughly he had been scared, "Your Vermont friend seems to be subject to fits. If he ever touches me like that again I'll give him a licking he won't forget."

"If Jacob touches you again for the same reason there won't be enough of you left to do any licking," replied Paul. "He's a giant when he's aroused. I wouldn't provoke him, if I were you."

Barton muttered something about not being afraid of a little underclassman, but it was noticeable that from that evening he let Jacob alone.

As for Jacob, he went his way apparently unmindful of Barton's existence as long as the latter remained in college.

But Paul felt that his oration and his getting the prize had made him enemies, and it was true. When young men begin to exalt the physical overmuch, the tendency is to make them more or less lacking in refinement of taste and judgment. When they add to that a gambling spirit, it is not a great ways to a selfish and even cruel spirit which makes men more like animals than men. The college betting over games was growing into a great evil. Boys who could not afford to lose money, whose parents were not able to bear more than the regular college expenses, were getting drawn into the current and enticed into a habit which seemed like such an easy way to make large sums. The betting spirit pervaded the college and Paul's oration was one of the first really plain and bold public utterances protesting against it. But that very fact raised feelings against him. When

he went into chapel next morning he could not help feeling that the sentiment was opposed to him. It was a hard thing for Paul to bear, for he was a very sensitive young man, and one of his weaknesses was a desire to be popular in college. He thought of the great game coming off the next week and vowed in his heart that he would restore his old standing in the good will of the fellows by doing his best on that occasion. He was playing the position of quarter back as it had never been played before and great things were expected of him.

It was with this thought on his mind that he opened his books Saturday night to get out a particularly difficult piece of work in conic sections. Barton was out attending a Society meeting, and he had the evening before him, or thought he had, when he was suddenly interrupted by several persons coming along the hall. A vigorous thump on the door was followed by the entrance into the room of the football captain and half a dozen of the team.

Paul started up, at first thinking the fellows had come in to make him trouble. But the captain said, "We've a piece of news, and thought best to come and tell you. The boys happened to be in my room and came along."

" Oh! " replied Paul. "Sit down! sit down, fellows! What's the news?"

" Well, you see I've just got a telegram that the fellows in X, through a combination of circumstances, can't play on Wednesday according to schedule."

" Then they'll have to forfeit the game," remarked

Paul.

"Of course," said the captain. "But see here! We're in need of our share of gate receipts from a played game, and X is as badly off for the money as we are. So they 've telegraphed to ask us to have the game Monday afternoon. It's the best we can do. We must have this game. We need the money the worst kind, and you know how X turns out to a game. They've pledged us two-thirds gate receipts for coming on a date outside of schedule, and I 've telegraphed that we will come."

" Well," said Paul thoughtfully, " I don't see as it'll make much difference to us."

" No, only we'll have to start earlier. It's a good four hundred miles you know."

" That's so. When shall we have to start?" asked Paul carelessly.

"There 's a midnight express leaves for X but does n't get in until four in the afternoon."

" Then we'll have to start to-morrow night. We need a little time to rest up after getting there. The six o'clock gets in at nine next morning," said one of the other men.

"That's our train, the only one, as I can see. Well, I must be getting at my work. Come on, fellows. Say, Sidney, you be on hand sure by six down at the station, I'll see about tickets and all that,"

and the captain moved towards the door. The others had already risen and gone out.

Paul sat a minute irresolute. Then he called out to the captain. "I say, Burt, tomorrow's Sunday. I don't like the idea of starting off for the game at six to-morrow."

"Why? What difference does that make? It's the only train we can take to get us there in time. What's the harm?"

Paul did not reply at once. He was thinking of the Sunday on the farm at home and the teaching of the mother about it. He was not narrow or bigoted in the least, but it did seem to him that one whole day out of seven ought to be specially set apart to God's use. He recalled what the mother had said in her letter about his playing football. "If at any time you find that playing involves the disobeying of God's laws you must stop playing at once." Then like a flash came the thought that he was playing for the college, and the fellows would consider him worse than a fool if he made any objection to starting for the game on Sunday, especially when no other train could possibly get them there in time to play. He thought of all this and a good deal more as the captain stood there with his hand on the door just ready to step out into the hall.

"I don't like to go to-morrow," he said finally in a low tone.

The captain came up to the table where Paul sat.

"See here, Sidney! What can we do? We can't arrange the game for any other date. And if we wait until Monday on midnight we shall not be able to make it. We can't play without you. Caxton isn't any good as quarter back. You're our best player. I don't like the idea of going tomorrow myself, but I don't see as it will do any great harm anyway. Don't make a fuss, old man. You won't, will you?"

The speech was a hard one for Paul to answer. He sat silent a minute, thinking hard. He thought of the construction the college would put upon his refusal to go. He had just gained the declamation prize. If he went right along now and helped win the game with the X University his popularity would be almost restored again. And besides, his mother - was she too strict about it ? What would she have him do? The train was going anyway. He couldn't stop the Sunday railway traffic. But then it was contrary to all his home teaching and training to do such a thing. If he was going to keep Sunday he ought to keep it. What did Sunday observance amount to if people did on that day the very things they did other days? What was the object of keeping it holy? If he traveled to a football game at six o'clock Sunday evening where would he draw the line? Why not travel on an excursion or a picnic at six in the morning or at noon?

Burt broke in on Paul's silence. "All right, old man. Of course you'll go. Why, the college would never forgive you if you didn't go. And if we win it will be through your work. The college never had a better quarter back." The captain again arose and walked to the door.

Paul called after him quietly: " But I can't go. I won't travel on Sunday for such a purpose. If it was a case of illness or accident or great need I might do it. But I have never believed in Sunday travel and I just won't go this time."

Burt pulled up and swore. Then he came back, and argued with Paul for half an hour. But Paul had

made up his mind, and when he did he was as immovable as a pyramid. Burt, finally, exhausted with the effort, seeing that Paul was determined, exclaimed, "Very well, Sidney! The disgrace of losing this game in case we do will be charged to you. I'll take Caxton along and the college will make it hot for you."

"It can make it hot if it wants to," replied Paul doggedly. "I don't regard a football game of such importance to the college as some fellows do."

Burt said nothing but withdrew in a savage temper. Next day after church services the rest of the team filed up into the room and urged and entreated and threatened in order to make Paul change his mind. But the more they talked the more firm Paul grew in his resolution not to go. The intense bitterness roused by his refusal is not easy to understand. There were young men on the team who had been educated to a reverence for Sunday observance as Paul had. But to their judgment a football game between two great colleges was so important an event that almost everything else became subordinate and secondary. Paul was a narrow-minded fanatic, a blue Puritan, a Sunday-school baby. They could not find adjectives enough to express their disgust. All this was a tremendous ordeal to Paul, who saw his popularity with the college fast slipping away, and winced under the sneers and misconstruction of his motive. It was a bitter experience for him. Only the constant thought that his mother would approve his stand in the matter gave him some real peace at heart. He

had been true to his own conscience in the matter, and what more can a man be? Or what less can he be, in order to preserve his self respect?

"I may be wrong to hold the Sunday view I hold," Paul would say to himself, - " but holding it as I do, I cannot but be true to it. I can not give the lie to my own convictions. I can not live a double life."

The team went off without Paul and the next day the entire college knew the reason of Paul's refusal to go. It was a comment on the condition of thought in the college at the time that almost every student in the institution blamed Paul for not going. To them the game was so important that almost nothing ought to get in the way of winning it. When next evening Burt telegraphed that his eleven had been beaten by the score of 18 to 6, the college almost to a man laid the defeat at Paul's door. And when the team came home next day and it was learned that two goals were gained by the X fellows through blunders of Caxton, the substitute quarter back, Paul's action in refusing to play was regarded almost as a sin by the athletic part of the school. He was cut dead by almost the entire crowd. At a meeting in the athletic society his name was taken off the team and another candidate substituted.

Throughout the winter Paul felt the bitterness of unpopularity. He grew very dispirited at times, and once made up his mind to leave and go to another college. He would have done so if it had not been for Jacob. To his great comfort his old friend stood royally by him, and was ready to defend him on the least provocation. Jacob even in his freshman year

had begun to make his mark in the college. He had a genius for the higher mathematics. In other studies he was commonplace. But when he rose to give a demonstration of some particularly difficult problem, his face grew animated, he looked a different person, and more than once he had won that most surprising of all things, applause from both professors and class in the lecture room. His defense of Paul had influence in the college. But more than that it was a great comfort to Paul to go into Jacob's room and talk it over with him.

There was another event that kept Paul in college at this period. A week after the defeat of the team at X he received two letters, one from David and one from Ruth. It is necessary to read those letters to explain the events that followed and influenced the lives of all the characters in this story.

Euth's letter read as follows :

Dear Paul, — You must have been wondering why we have not written you lately, but you will understand it when you read this. A week ago today I was with mother just as it was growing dark, and she asked me to go and call David into the house; she said she wanted to see him; I went and called him, but he did not answer. I supposed he was out in the barn yard unhitching the horses. I had seen him drive in there a few minutes before. Mother had been as well as usual all day, and I did not dream of anything happening to her until she spoke to me again, and then I saw that she was suffering in some unusual way. She said she felt a numbness creep over her,

and wanted David to come in at once.

I was frightened, for mother never spoke that way before, and I thought she was dying. I ran right out into the yard to get David, but he and the team were gone. O Paul, I can not tell you how terrified I felt for a little while I I had no idea where David could have gone, and I was alone with mother, and I was afraid she was going to die there. I ran back into the house and found mother suffering from a paralytic shock. She could not speak, but I talked to her and she answered me with looks. And when I told her David was gone, and asked her if I should go to Peterson's for help she said Yes with her eyes. I asked her if she felt afraid to stay alone while I was gone, but she smiled and if she could have spoken she would have said, 'I shall not be alone; the good God is with me.' I saddled the colt that David broke this fall, and rode with all my might over to Peterson's, and they sent one of the boys to town for a doctor, and then I hurried back.

When I came into the house mother was not conscious. I thought she was dead. It was terrible all alone that way. It was ten o'clock before the doctor came and he could not do any thing. Mother did not seem to be suffering. Next day she grew a little better. Now she is out of danger, but has lost the use of her voice and of her hands. That seems dreadful to me. You know how much she used to enjoy working with her hands. She just lies on the bed now, and she is the same dear patient loving, praying mother as ever. But her dear voice is hushed; maybe forever so in this world.

Doesn't it seem strange, Paul, that such a person so motherly who never did anything but God's will, should be so afflicted, while hundreds of bad persons walk about in perfect health? It is a mystery to me, but mother says the good Father will explain it all sometime and make things even. I say, mother says; " she can not utter a word, but when I talk to her she tells me all that with her looks. Dear, dear mother! She says she does not suffer as much pain as before, but she is almost as helpless as a baby in everything now.

David will write and tell you his story. I must stop now to do up my work. I am real well, for which I thank Grod. Mother sends her best and heartiest love and she is proud of her boy in college. I read her your account of the prize contest, and I wish you could have seen her when I came to the place where you received the prize. I will take the money you sent home and pay the doctor's bill. O dear, what a great pity we do not have money at such a time as this. David is working himself like a slave to pay off the mortgage. But he keeps strong and well and seems real cheerful. He is the best brother-you and he, I mean.

We all send love, mother most of all.

Your loving sister,

Ruth.

Paul laid his head down on the table and sobbed after reading this letter. The thought of the mother afflicted so terribly was almost maddening to him. He was more than half minded to start right for

home, and give up all thought of college any more. Then be picked up David's letter and read that. David said : —

Ruth has told you of mother's shock. I can not add anything to her account except to say that the doctor told me that mother might live in this condition for a long time. There is no immediate danger of her death, although if the paralysis reaches her heart, it will of course end her suffering very quickly. It seems terrible to write this way about poor dear mother, but I know she would want you to know the very worst, or as she would say the very best, for mother does not shrink from death, and has the most beautiful faith in God's goodness and love to her. I don't see it myself, but I can not criticise mother's belief. She is happy in it. Sometime I may feel differently. If mother's prayers can help me any I certainly shall.

The night that mother was taken ill I was out in the yard with the team. I had been hauling grain all day. I had begun to unhitch, when who should come into the yard but one of Phil Raymond's boys. He was all excited over the fact that Carl had been found on the prairie near their house, and suffering from a wound of some sort that he was afraid would prove fatal. You know it's only a mile over there, and young Raymond wanted me to come right over. So I hitched the tugs on again, and we jumped into the wagon and I drove through the pasture and out at the west end instead of going past the house. I ought to have told mother and Ruth where I was going, but I thought I would be back inside of an hour and I

wouldn't stop.

Well, when I got over to Raymond's, there was Carl lying on a bed with a fearful gun shot or pistol shot wound in his side. He was delirious from fever, and nobody knows yet how he came to be hurt, or how long he lay on the prairie before he was found.

After the doctor came and dressed his wound, I came away and got home just a little after the doctor reached there. Ruth behaved like a heroine in my absence. I can not say too much for her. She did what she could in every way and all that a man could do. I didn't say anything about Carl until next morning, that is, not to mother. But I have been over to Raymond's every day now, and Carl is not yet out of danger. He talks about being pursued, and I am almost sure he was shot by some one connected with the quarry. It is a mystery to us. What with this trouble and mother's I have been pretty well worked up. But my best hold you know is an oxlike body and I am going on with the work all right. We do not want you to think of stopping college. You could not do anything by coming home.

It was very good of you to send home \$50 of the prize money. It came at just the right time, but I am afraid you could not spare it. Look out for yourself, and don't break down. Anything but these sickly educated fellows. We shall pull along somehow out here. The prospects are not as dark as they seem. Another year of good crops will give us a big boost on the mortgage. So don't you worry. Of course if mother gets worse, and wants you, I will send for you. So you needn't feel anxious or stop your college

course at all.

With love from us all,
David.

David's matter-of-fact narration made Paul feel better. But still the news was a severe blow to him. He could not shut out the sight of the mother lying there in that lonely prairie house unable to speak or use her hands any more. That night Paul prayed as he had never yet prayed in all his life.

The next day he went over and read the letters to Jacob. It was a relief to have Jacob's sympathy and counsel. The football incident paled into a very little thing before this home trouble.

Somehow the fellows got an inkling that Paul was in trouble, and there was a change of feeling toward him on the part of a number of men who began to see into the real character of the man from Veronda. But Paul's heart was sore as the fall term ended and the long winter term began.

His struggle with poverty began to assume serious proportions. He had tutored a little but it did not pay for time and strength expended. When the winter term was fairly begun he had incurred an indebtedness in the way of board and fuel and other little things that made him nervous. He did not say anything about it to anybody, not even to Jacob. Jacob had the same struggle to get along. They were in the same boat. It began to be a serious problem with Paul how he should pay his way. So matters stood one evening in the middle of November when the Rook tenement, the building Paul and Jacob had

visited at Christmas time, took fire.

Paul heard the alarm and went across to Jacob's room, which looked over the city from the east window. He found Jacob staring out of the window and they could both see a red glow in the tenement district.

" Let's go to it," said Paul, who had a kind of mania for fires, and generally went when there was an alarm of anything within three miles.

"All right. It looks like the Rook building!" said Jacob.

" So it does !" replied Paul, looking out of the window again. " Come on, let's run for it."

They rushed downstairs with a crowd of college men, who tore out of their rooms and were soon on the dead run for the scene of the fire. The night was bitter cold and a strong high wind was blowing from the east.

CHAPTER XI

A DEATH TRAP.

By the time Paul and Jacob reached the scene of the fire it was a foregone conclusion that the Rook Tenement was doomed. It was on fire in a dozen places. It was an old wooden building full of all sorts of combustible rubbish, and the high wind spread the flames with frightful rapidity.

When Paul and Jacob reached the end of one of the alleys, they stopped in the midst of a surging mass of men and women who were held back by the police

and the fire department. The department worked at great disadvantage. The narrowness of the alley and streets surrounding the tenement increased the difficulty and danger of the fire fighters. The old building was a death trap to those attempting to rescue. Paul and Jacob, remembering the crooked staircases and narrow hallways they had traveled on that Christmas night, wondered how the tenants in the fourth or fifth stories could ever make their way out.

There were other men standing in that crowd who were having the same thought, and more than one workingman cursed the law which compelled every owner of a rented block to provide suitable fire escapes and then winked at the selfish cruelty which failed to provide such escapes because of the expense of them.

At first it was believed that all the inmates of the block had escaped. But as the flames swept through the building, and out of the windows, and at last burst through the roof, pale, terrified faces began to appear at the upper windows. Soon the horrified crowd below counted fourteen persons who had been sleeping when the fire began, and whose escape from the building had been cut off by the burning staircases. They now appeared at the windows and begged in the most beseeching cries for help.

To his last moment on earth Paul will never forget the scenes that followed. One after another, six of the fourteen miserable creatures threw themselves out of the building to the ground before the firemen could reach the upper windows with the long ladders.

Of the remaining eight, three were evidently suffocated by the smoke and fell back into the burning building, and so perished. The firemen succeeded by the most heroic efforts in rescuing the remainder, although two of the rescuers were so badly burned that they died of their injuries a few days afterwards. But what most impressed Paul and Jacob at the time was the feeling that all that awful killing and maiming of life was the result of human greed and selfishness.

Here was a building containing hundreds of rooms where fathers, mothers and children made their homes; a building which was their only shelter from the street. It had been so constructed by civilized men for their brother men that the very entrances and exits of the structure were death traps to the miserable inmates who called the hovels where they ate and slept home. And there stood an agonized crowd of men, who groaned in anguish at their perfect helplessness in the midst of such destruction of life.

Paul almost fainted at the sight. As soon as he and Jacob could get out of the crowd they turned their backs on the dreadful scene and both of them feeling nervous and high strung after the tragedy of the night walked together for an hour through the city talking over the event. The fire had by that time completely destroyed the block, but was under the control of the department.

"Thank God," said Paul, as they walked up college hill and entered their hall, "thank God that old death trap is wiped out if it will teach men the lesson of the

duty we owe our brothers"

"Yes, but such lessons are costly," replied Jacob.

"Must humanity advance only through sorrow and bloodshed and agony and death? Is there no easier way to advance reforms than through revolutions?"

"Yes, the revolution of the heart of man will do it."

"It is a slow process," replied Jacob. "And," he added after a pause, "it does not seem to be the way of history so far."

"Nevertheless, is it not the way of Christ? Was he not a reformer instead of a revolutionist?"

"Yes; but what would he do in a case like the one we have witnessed here to-night?"

"One thing is certain to me," replied Paul after a moment's thoughtful silence. "Christ would lay the murder of those poor souls at the door of the men who in their greed for money built that tenement, and did not provide for the safety of its inmates. And did you hear that man talking near to us to-night? He said the largest owner in the tenement was one of the most prominent men in the city in business, social and church circles. Yet that man was providing for the luxuries of his home and helping to pay the expenses of a church from money he received from the rental of a building which he must have known was dangerous to life. Would not Christ charge that man as one of the guilty ones in this night's tragedy?"

"I believe he would," replied Jacob solemnly, „Paul, we will live to help right some of these wrongs, won't we?"

"God grant it!" exclaimed Paul earnestly.

The burning of the old Rook Tenement marked an epoch in Paul's life which was so important in its results that we have seemed to go a little out of the way to tell it. He was receiving impressions all along through his college course, and his sensitive, high-strung, passionate nature had begun to respond to the cry of humanity already. He had never determined his profession. Whether he would be a lawyer, a doctor, or preacher, did not yet occupy his thought. Incidents like the fire gradually shaped his choice for a profession, but as yet the thought of any particular life policy was not outlined for him. Just how much the sight of those wretched victims throwing themselves from that building to the ground influenced his decision in making up his mind about his life work, he himself did not know for years afterwards.

It was drawing on towards the first of December and Paul was growing more and more anxious about his indebtedness. Every meal that he ate at his boarding place choked him. He was six weeks behind with his payment, and although the landlady was very kind and said nothing, being one of those good natured easy going persons who do not worry even over what is owing to them, Paul grew more and more uneasy every day. He had apparently exhausted his resources. There was no tutoring he could do, and no means of making any money and remaining in the college at the same time.

One evening he went over to see Jacob, and somehow, although Paul had fully meant to keep the

secret of his financial embarrassment from his old chum's knowledge, Jacob stumbled upon it in his slow but decided way. Paul had finally to acknowledge that he was thirty-seven dollars in debt, saw no way out, indeed was getting in deeper every day, and would probably have to leave college in order to earn the money.

"What can you do?" asked Jacob.

"I might hire a hand organ and a monkey and go around picking up pennies in a tin cup," replied Paul a little disconsolately.

"Do you think you could learn to play on a hand organ readily?" inquired Jacob.

"If I couldn't, I 'd teach the monkey to play and carry the tin cup myself- unless you would go with me and help, Jacob."

" I might dress up as a trained bear, and you could lead me around with a string while I danced to the tune of a cracked flute," replied Jacob with the utmost gravity.

"I'm afraid it wouldn't pay," sighed Paul. " No, I must find a job of some kind, and quit college for awhile. I don't see any way out of it, do you, old man? "

For answer, Jacob arose and going over to an old writing desk unlocked a little .drawer and pulled it open. He beckoned to Paul, who went over and looked in. There were fifty silver dollars in separate piles of five dollars. Paul stared, not knowing that Jacob had a cent saved up.

"Help yourself," said Jacob with the air of a Monte Cristo who has unlimited credit for uncounted millions.

"Where did you get all that wealth, old man?" asked Paul, amazed at the way Jacob kept money in the room.

" Why you know I've been tutoring Clyde of the junior class in higher mathematics for about three months now. He 's rich and awfully slow to learn anything, so it's been a kind of silver mine for me. If there is anything I know it's mathematics, and if there is anything he doesn't know it 's the same thing, and so between us we get along firstrate; he furnishes the demand and I furnish the supply, you know."

" But," said Paul, " you certainly haven't saved up all this over and beyond your expenses?"

" I have, though. I don't owe a cent today. Say, Paul, take what you want. You can pay it back when you get it, if you want to. As long as Clyde continues to know as little as he does at present I can worry along pretty, comfortably."

Paul shook his head decidedly. "I won't do anything of the kind! I would rather go out and beg on the street. Jacob, old boy, I appreciate your offer, but I can't do it, really I can't."

Jacob shut the drawer and locked it. "It's after banking hours now," he said whimsically. "But the door is open every morning at ten."

"No, I won't draw out a cent of it, Jacob. You'll need it before you get through. I can get work for three or four months in the city. The folks at home don't have enough themselves. I can't ask David for anything. I've got to quit a little while. I don't see any other way, do you?"

"Unless you present your check at the bank

tomorrow at ten," answered Jacob. "Or under the circumstances, as president, I might make you a private loan if you need the money to-day."

" You 're the best of friends, Jacob, but it's no use. I won't take it, and you know I won't."

Jacob knew it very well, and did not urge any more. The two friends had a little further talk and Paul finally decided to look for work next day. He reckoned that by making an extra effort he could keep up his studies enough to enter the junior year in case he should be obliged to stay out all winter and spring. He had known men who had done it, and he believed he could himself, if he kept his health. He was full of pluck and determination, only he could not quite choke down his grief at the thought of his mother and the hardships of David and Ruth. Still his part seemed to be plainly to keep right on with his studies and do the best he could for the honor of the dear ones at home.

In his search for work next day he succeeded better than he had dared to hope. He went frankly to the proprietor of the store where he had worked during the Christmas holidays and asked for a recommendation. The proprietor very willingly gave him one, expressed his regret at not having a place for him in the store, and suggested that he apply for a place as night clerk in one of the big hotels of the city, where he said the man acting as clerk was going to leave within a week.

Paul went over to the hotel at once, and presented his application and recommendation. The hotel landlord was taken with his appearance, and

engaged him to take the place of the night clerk who was to leave in three days.

The three days passed by and before Paul had time to realize the change he found himself behind the desk of the big hotel, performing the duties of night clerk at a salary of thirty-five dollars a month and board. The duties of the position were in one sense responsible, and called for good judgment and some knowledge of affairs. Paul soon proved himself a useful man in his place. Every boy and young man who ever does any thinking on his own account, or who has studied the lives of successful Christian business men, knows that in almost any position, a clerk, or salesman, or office hand, can make himself useful in ways outside of his exact duties as employed. Before a week had passed Paul was in high esteem with the landlord and all the employes of the house.

He reckoned on being able to save nearly every cent of his earnings, and counted on staying long enough to get a little extra to help him out, if he entered college in the coming fall, to go on with his studies of the junior year. His hours were from nine in the evening to seven in the morning, when the assistant day clerk relieved him. Then he went to sleep and generally waked about half past four. Taking out the time spent for meals and the extra time he very often put in helping in various work about the office, he found that he had at least three hours for study. He had a little room in one corner of the house where he could be by himself and in that little place he spent some of the most studious moments of his life.

The first week after his engagement at the hotel, he was so busy that he had no time to go up to the college. But one evening he found time to walk out to his old quarters in hall. He went right up to Jacob's room, not caring to see Barton, who, by the way, when Paul left, had paid him about half what he had himself received for the room furniture. Paul walked into hall briskly, ran up the two flights and knocked at Jacob's door. There was no reply, and Paul turned the knob and walked in. What was his surprise to find the room empty. Jacob's supply of furniture had been very scanty, but it was missing entirely now. Paul went across the hall way to the room of a classmate and inquired about his old chum.

„Oh, Wendell disappeared two or three days ago. I didn't know he was gone until I went over to borrow his hatchet."

"Do you know where he is? " asked Paul, thinking Jacob had simply changed his room for a better one.

"No, I don't. I haven't seen him in college lately."

Paul went out and inquired of every body. The janitors did not know anything about him. He might have hired a room in a private house. He was not in any of the college halls. None of the college men had seen Jacob for two or three days. Paul finally had to go back to the hotel without knowing anything of Jacob's whereabouts. He was troubled about it but did not know what to do.

The next evening as he went into the office to begin his work, still wondering where Jacob could be, the landlord, who was behind the desk, said to him,

"Sidney, there 's a queer-looking fellow been in here this afternoon applying for a position as waiter or porter in the house. He says he knows you, and is quite sure you will recommend him for some place. He said he 'd come in again about half past nine."

" What sort of a fellow ? " asked Paul.

"Why, a green-looking specimen. Talks at the rate of not more than three miles an hour. I wouldn't take him to be more than a country lad if it was n't for his eyes and something else. He talks good English enough, one word in ten seconds, and looks like a strapping fellow physically."

„Jacob, as I'm alive!" exclaimed Paul in wonder.

"What on earth can he be doing here?"

"You know him, do you?" asked the landlord.

"Know him! Why, he 's my old college chum."

"Do you think he would make a good hand in the dining room?"

"I don't know," replied Paul, a little confused. He had not thought of Jacob in that connection. He could not understand his motive in appearing at the hotel. When half past nine struck, the hotel lobby happened to be almost empty. There were a few commercial travelers lounging around in the big chairs, but no one was at the desk, when the large door at the farther end of the lobby opened and in came Jacob. He walked right up to the office desk and in his usual grave manner said,

"How do you do, Paul? How do you like the hotel business?"

Paul shook hands with him. He was delighted to see his old chum again.

"It seems good to see you," he said. "But what are you doing ? Why have you left college?"

"I'm going into the hotel business for a change," replied Jacob.

"Nonsense, old man. Honest now, did you apply for a place to work here?"

"I did, and if you'll give me a good recommendation I believe I can get a job."

Just then the proprietor came up. Paul introduced Jacob, who at once wanted to know if there was a place in the hotel open to him.

"Why, I don't know but there is," replied the landlord good-naturedly. "Have you had any experience in the dining room?"

"Served as waiter two summers in the Fabyan, White Mountains, and one winter was clerk in the Tallahassee House, St. Augustine," replied Jacob.

" We can give you a place in the dining room. One of our waiters left us today."

The landlord evidently wanted to give Jacob a trial to see what he could do.

Paul looked on, still not understanding Jacob's motive in leaving college to go to work in the dining room of a hotel. In a few moments the landlord had stated the terms, and Jacob was told to report at six o'clock the next morning to the head waiter. The proprietor walked off and Jacob remained to talk with Paul.

"What 's the matter, Jacob ? Did you get expelled from college?"

"Not that I know of," replied Jacob, who seemed very contented since the landlord accepted his

application.

"Well, what are you doing this for ? Are you hard up for money?"

"Not particularly." Jacob rattled a lot of loose change in his pocket.

"Well, what does it all mean, old man? I haven't asked you if you're crazy. But I don't know but I ought to."

"If I was, I wouldn't want to let you know it."

"But what is the reason for you 're coming in here then? " asked Paul, who knew that Jacob was queer but generally had good reasons for all his actions.

"The fact is I was getting terribly lonesome after you left." said Jacob in a low tone. "So I sold out and packed a razor and a toothbrush, and a bunch of tooth picks, and a cake of soap, in my grip and started down here to get work. I wanted to be near you. Say, can I room with you to-night? The proprietor didn't assign me a front corner anywhere!"

Paul could not help laughing, but he was touched by Jacob's devotion. It was a very foolish thing for his old chum to do; but what could he say? He knew from experience that when Jacob set out to do a thing it was a hopeless task to oppose him. Of course it was absurd for him to throw up his college studies to go to work as a waiter in a hotel, but Paul could not argue with him, and the end of it all was that Jacob went into the dining room the next morning and began his work, much to the interest of the proprietor, who evidently regarded him as a curiosity in human shape and wanted to see what he could do there.

To the surprise of everybody Jacob made a first-class waiter. However slow of speech he might be, he was quick enough of action, and soon established a reputation among the other waiters for knowing a number of tricks in the trade that were new to them. There was, however, one individual who was jealous of Jacob, and determined to lower him, if possible. This was the head waiter. Human nature in the dining room and in the kitchen of a big city hotel is the same thing as in the drawing room of the fashionable society people, who are exclusive and select. There were rivalries and jealousies in that little world and Jacob was soon aware of that fact. But he went his way, coolly ignoring them, and in spite of some unpleasant passages with the head waiter and one or two others he managed to keep from having any direct quarrel with them.

One evening, two weeks after Jacob became a waiter, one of the fashionable clubs in the city had a dinner in the private dining room of the hotel and Jacob was one of the several waiters assigned to serve. A great deal of liquor was drunk. The horror that Jacob had of intoxicants can not be fully understood without knowing the history of his family. It is enough to say that he endured untold agonies all the evening as he saw one after another of the young men members of the club growing tipsy or foolish or silly under the influence of the liquor consumed so recklessly. He had avoided passing any intoxicants to any of them. When they asked for it he let some one of the other waiters bring and pour out the stuff. He had a genuine horror of actually handling it and giving it to

a human being. The head waiter soon discovered that Jacob had refused several times to bring wine or champagne to the guests, so he called him off into a corner and wanted to know, in a savage tone, what he meant by insulting the members of the club.

Jacob looked at him with the most undisguised contempt.

"I consider that I am the person insulted by being obliged to wait on a lot of hogs dressed up like men!" he said, with a strength of energy that made the head waiter draw back a little.

But a look of scorn succeeded and he said, " You can either wait on the people or leave the hotel"

"Do you mean help to make them brutes by giving them that infernal drink ?"

"I mean that you have got to hand them the wine and champagne as the other waiters do or leave this house," replied the head waiter angrily.

"We will see about that," said Jacob. He took off his apron and before the head waiter had time to realize what was going to happen, Jacob had walked rapidly out of the room and straight for the office. The proprietor happened to be in there. Jacob went right up to the desk, and asked if he might see him a few moments in private. The landlord, who was a good-natured man, granted his request, and the two went into the private office. Just what Jacob said it is not necessary to tell here, but after a few minutes they came out, and Jacob went back into the dining room. The proprietor called up the head waiter and said a few words to him that made him turn red and then pale. Jacob was let alone after this. He refused

all the evening to touch the wine, and the head waiter never said a word. But from that evening he was a sworn enemy of Jacob and waited a good opportunity to get even with him.

So affairs went on for almost two months. Jacob and Paul had very many delightful moments together. Paul remonstrated again and again at the foolish action of Jacob, but it made no impression on him! For his own part Paul had saved enough to pay his boarding house bill and had about decided to remain in the hotel through the spring and winter. That would give him time to earn a little and save up enough to give him a start in the fall. News from the home had been favorable. The mother was no worse, and David was planning already for a large crop the coming season.

Matters were in this shape along towards the close of January when one day at noon, as the dining room began to fill up with the regular guests for the midday meal, there was a sound of confusion in the office, strange cries and a drunken man's voice attempting to sing a song. The head waiter, who was standing near the door leading out of the office, called to Jacob as he went by.

" Say, there 's a person in the office says he 's related to you, and wants to see you."

Jacob turned very white, paused a moment, then suddenly rushed out of the dining room into the office.

There stood a man reeling in eccentric circles in the middle of the lobby. He was dressed in the clothes of a gentleman, that is, with a suit of black, Prince

Albert coat, fashionable trowsers, and a tall hat; but all these articles were very shabby and seedy. He was calling aloud for, "Jacob, my boy! I want to see him!"

The day clerk had ordered the porters to put him out. At this moment Jacob appeared. He walked right up to the drunken man, and said to the astonished porters, „Leave him to me. He 's my father!" The porters fell back, the clerk stared, the landlord just then appeared at the door of his office, and Jacob was conscious that as he stood there holding up the miserable drunken being from falling that the lobby was a circle of sneering, pitying, curious, grinning, cruel faces. And in that moment his soul went down into the bitter pool of hell. O Drink! how many victims thou hast slain! How many hearts thou hast broken! Will thy cruel throne never be overturned in Christian America?

CHAPTER XII

Jacob's father.

"Well, Jake, old boy, how goes it? Living in the lap of luxury here, eh?" The wretched father leered into Jacob's face, with a wink that tried to express a world of knowledge concerning Jacob's affairs.

Jacob spoke in a low tone, " Come out-of-doors a minute, I want to tell you something."

"No you don't! I 'm not such a fool as you think. Let's have a good square meal first. Dinner's all ready. I'll eat, and you pay. That's fair, ain't it?"

Jacob seized his father's coat and spoke to him, looking him full in the face. "Come out of the hotel at once, or I'll call the police; you know what for!"

This time Jacob's sternness and the look that followed seemed to intimidate the drunken man. He sullenly allowed Jacob to lead him out of the lobby into the hall-way. "You stay here till I get my hat!" commanded Jacob in a tone that was almost terrible. The man leaned up against the wall and smiled faintly, but did not object, and Jacob rushed back into the office and right up to the landlord.

"I'll give up my place in the hotel. You needn't discharge me. I know that you don't want any one in your employ who has a drunken gambler hanging onto him all the time. You can pay Paul my wages if you care to pay anything."

Jacob said it all with that curious energy that characterized him when he was in a passion, and the landlord, who felt relieved to have him go but did not feel like dismissing him, simply said, "I'll pay the money to Sidney. Sorry to have"

"It 's no matter. I'll get my things sometime."

Jacob tore off his apron, snatched his hat from the hook in the office where he had been in the habit of leaving it and hurried to his father. He took him by the arm and led him into the street.

Fairly out-of-doors, Jacob succeeded in getting his father off upon a side street where there was not much passing, and in spite of the drunken remonstrances of the man he continued to march him rapidly along until they reached one of the open

parks of the city. On one side of the park was a broad seat running around the base of a large tree. The sunny side of it was sheltered from the winter chill, and it being noon.

the seat was deserted and there were few persons passing. Jacob placed the drunken man on this seat and stood before him looking down at him with a look of the most intense and passionate reproach.

"Well, Jacob, old boy, this is not treating your old father with respect; think so?" he said.

"What do you want? Come, out with it!" replied Jacob roughly.

"Want something to eat," answered his father sullenly.

"And drink too, why don't you say! How much money do you want out of me to go to gambling again?"

"Look here, Jacob!" began the father angrily. He was sober enough to know what he was talking about. "Haven't I kept away from you a long time now? Have I asked you for any money since - since -"

"Since the last time? No, you haven't. Here, take that!" Jabob flung five dollars down on the seat by the side of the man, waited a minute and then said, "You need n't follow me again. Of course I know what you'll do with the money."

"Do you, Jacob, do you?" asked the man as he clutched the money and thrust it down into his pocket. "Then you must know a good deal more'n I do, for I don't know what I'm going to do with it."

Jacob didn't reply. He seemed to be thinking. This drunken gambler was his father! Once he had been a handsome and ambitious man. But the demon of

gambling had entered into him and he was now a brute and a slave to a passion that today is dragging thousands of young men into the pit.

The man staggered to his feet and seemed eager to be going. He waited a minute as if expecting a word from Jacob, and then without even a gesture of farewell started back towards the center of the city. Jacob seemed forgetful of his presence. He stood by the tree with an indescribable look of bitterness on his face. Suddenly he felt possessed of a desire to follow his father and see what he actually did with the money.

He turned just in time to see him cross the square at the end of the park. It did not take Jacob long to get near enough to watch him, keeping on the other side of the street so as not to be seen himself.

The gambler, for that was what Jacob's father had become, started along without losing any time, and as if he had a definite plan of action that required as much haste as possible. He was almost sober again, yet his gait betrayed an unsteadiness and wavering uncertainty that made it easy for Jacob to shadow him. At last he turned up a staircase that opened directly on the sidewalk, and disappeared. Jacob plunged across the street and followed after. At the top of the staircase was a narrow hallway upon which several doors opened. The gambler pushed open one of these doors and went in.

Jacob, hearing the sound of several voices inside, boldly followed and was astonished to find himself in a good-sized room, comfortably furnished, and almost filled with a crowd of men, nearly all of them

young. They were occupied in gambling around a long table upon which was placed a number of small revolving tables with figures from 1 to 100 painted upon them. The gambling consisted in placing any sum from one dollar to one hundred dollars upon the corresponding figure; then the proprietor of the table or the assistant, by means of revolving the disk according to certain regulations explained beforehand, announced a gain or a loss in the amount staked according as the figure upon which the coin was placed stopped at certain distances from a smaller lettered disk which remained stationary in the center.

It took only the merest insight into this contrivance to see that the result of the gambling was entirely under the control of the proprietor of the tables and he could gain or lose almost at pleasure. And yet such is the foolishness and stupidity of the man once possessed with the gambling spirit that hundreds of men had been fleeced in that room repeatedly, and yet they would come back again and again expecting that their "luck" would change and "fortune" as they called it, would smile upon them. Poor fools! They made one group out of a fast and alarmingly increasing number of young men in this country who are trying by betting and speculating and stock ventures and pools and combinations to get something for nothing. In all ages and degrees of civilization the mania for getting something for nothing is a selfish madness that has plunged nations and individuals into perdition. America today needs to guard against this growing evil, for it

is fastening upon some of the brightest and loveliest of the youth of the land, God help them!

It should be said here that this particular form of gambling in such an open and undisguised manner was at the time in the city where Paul and Jacob were getting their collegiate education disgracefully carried on with the knowledge and even connivance of the police. It should also be said that since the time recorded in this story, public indignation has aroused sentiment sufficient to drive out the open violators of the law. But the gambling is still carried on in defiance of regulations.

Jacob's father walked directly up to one of the tables and put down the entire five dollars Jacob had given him. Jacob stood back among a small group of young men who were evidently looking on, spectators fascinated with the play, some of them evidently losers, all of them with the excitement of the gambling passion stamped on their faces. Jacob's heart boiled within him as his father threw down the money, but he made no move to stop him. The table revolved and as it came to a stop there was dead silence around it. It was not a noisy room anywhere. That was noticeable. The man in charge of the table announced the result, and two or three young men eagerly received twice or three times the amount they had staked. The remaining piles of money, including the five dollars that Jacob's father had put down were swept off the table into the proprietor's box.

The wretched man, who had evidently staked his last cent on this miserable venture, looked around

vaguely on the faces that were gathered there. Not one of them had any look of pity on them. Gambling makes men cruel. After a moment's hesitation the father leaned over the table and said something to the man.

He replied gruffly, „Move back and let some one else come up and take your place. You're in the way!"

Then Jacob saw his father lean over the table again and ask a question.

This time the man behind the table replied, " You can if you want to. It's none of my business. I'll credit you three dollars for it."

Jacob had not caught the question, and did not know what his father was going to do. He was amazed when the miserable creature, trembling, took off his coat and handed it over to the man behind the table, who coolly hung it up and then placed three dollars on the figure stamped upon the revolving board. It was painful to watch the intense look of the deluded gambler as the table spun around. He watched it as eagerly as a beast watches its victim as it creeps slowly up to it.

The table came to a stop and the man made his calculations, and then slowly reached out after the three dollars. At the same time Jacob's father uttered a cry that was like that of a wounded animal, and reached out his trembling hand towards the money. His fingers worked convulsively as if he would like to put them around the proprietor's neck and strangle him.

" Sorry, sir," said the man coldly. " But luck is against you today. Stand back please and give place to some

one else."

The gambler stumbled back, and at the same instant Jacob, who had edged forward, took his place and faced the man. The man looked up a little surprised. Jacob said briefly, "Let me have that coat, will you?" At the same time he threw down three dollars.

The man behind the table smiled disagreeably, and said, "Coats have gone up. They are four dollars to-day."

Without another word Jacob threw down another dollar. The man rose and took down the coat and handed it over. Jacob turned at once and caught his father by the arm.

"Here! Put it on, and come right out with me!" he said sternly. His father instantly obeyed and shambled after Jacob, and both went down the stairease and were once more together out in the street.

What to do now that he had his father to provide for was a question for Jacob. It will be remembered that he had saved up fifty dollars from tutoring in college. On leaving college for the hotel he had changed the silver to bills and had them now in his pocket. His wages while in the hotel the first week had been nearly spent. The five dollars he had given his father and the four dollars for the coat represented nearly all his money aside from the fifty dollars.

As he walked along, a plan began to take shape in his mind. Much as he loathed the sight and thought of his father, and terrible as was the memory of the cruelty the man had shown his mother, Jacob felt that he could not desert him at this moment. They passed oy a cheap boarding house. Jacob turned

back and assuring himself that his father was wellnigh sober now he went up to the place and rang. They went in and he engaged a cheap room for the two. He then took his father out to a restaurant near by and watched him while he ate with a trembling eagerness that showed how long he had been without food. Coming back they passed by a saloon, and the look that the gambler threw into the door of that hells palace made Jacob shudder. He was obliged to drag the man away and only after threatening him with jail could he compel him to pass along.

All the rest of the afternoon Jacob watched by the wreck of humanity who, seemingly exhausted by the events of the day, threw himself down on the bed and slept or dozed until supper time. They went out again to get a meal at a restaurant, Jacob not caring to appear with his father at the table of the boarding house, and while they were at their meal there some one flung open the door and threw in a dodger. The breeze from the door wafted the paper to Jacob's feet. He stooped and picked it up and read an announcement of a gospel meeting to be held in a large hall near by. The speaker advertised was one of the most famous evangelists in the world, and the minute Jacob saw his name he decided to take his father and go to the meeting. He thought with himself, "The grace of God is mighty enough to convert the most depraved and sinful soul on earth. May it not be possible that the power of the Holy Spirit may so touch his hardened encrusted heart as to save him? What else on earth can make a new

man of him? There are institutions that reclaim the drunkard. But even supposing I could get him into one of them, who will reclaim the gambler?" thought Jacob. "Who will put any drug of any kind in him to take away the terrible thirst for betting and gambling and getting something for nothing?" Jacob shuddered as he remembered how his father had marched past a dozen saloons to get to the gambling hell. That passion was stronger with him than the other, the passion for drink. "No," he went on thinking, "this wretched creature needs divine help to be a new man. Nothing can make him all over into a new man but the Spirit of God." Jacob had heard of such things happening. Why might they not happen to this man who had sinned so terribly against God and man?

When he paid for the supper Jacob took out his pocket book, and gave the restaurant keeper a five dollar bill. In order to get it he had to take out the entire fifty dollars which he had rolled up in a manner peculiar to himself. Jacob did not keep his money like any one else. His father greedily watched him as he took out the bill, and put the rest back into his pocket book and then put the pocket book into an inside vest pocket. He took the change and the two went out.

It was now dark and Jacob determined to go at once to the place of the gospel meeting. It was not far away, and when he told his father where he proposed to go the gambler made very little objection. Jacob was a little surprised, as he had anticipated some trouble. But taking his readiness to go as a good sign, Jacob,

holding him by the arm, made his way towards the hall only to find on approaching the place that an immense throng was packed about the doors, although it wanted an hour and a half before the time of service. They waited half an hour until the door was opened and then found good seats almost in the front row.

Jacob never forgot that night. He was not a member of any church, but he was one of the most religious souls in that house. Even the famous evangelist did not have a greater reverence for truth and a greater love of God than did the plain-faced young man down near the front, who sat by the side of the miserable specimen of humanity, and recalled all that the man had done to make life a bitter thing to a sainted mother.

The service began with singing by the great audience that filled the hall to the very roof. Then the evangelist offered a prayer which seemed to melt all hearts with its tender appeal for help and its strong faith in the power of the Holy Spirit. He then read a passage of Scripture with brief comments and almost without any formal beginning began to talk about one of the verses he had read. Before the audience knew it they were listening to a plain simple gospel sermon which pointed out the number of things from which Christ could save iiKni. He mentioned infidelity, covetous-ness, hypocrisy, lying, impurity, swearing and drunkenness. He pointed out the awful nature of these sins and pictured the results of them on the life of a soul. Then he showed how the love of God was so great that it could save a

man completely from any one of these terrible vices or sins. He went on to say, „There is one more prevailing habit, which is draining the lifeblood of thousands all over the world, a habit which saps truth, undermines honesty, ruins families, causes untold misery in the home, and places common rugged toil and frugality in contempt. It is a habit which at the present time in this very city is ruining more young men than the drink habit. It is sanctioned in certain forms by law and smiled upon by society. It is a custom in our colleges, it is met with in the highest social circles, and is sometimes endorsed by the press and pulpit. Yet this habit is wrecking souls by the thousands, and Christian America is only just beginning to awake to a knowledge of the terrible nature of this habit. What is this terrible vice ? It is the vice known as gambling.“

At the mention of that word, Jacob, who had been following the speaker with the closest attention, started and glanced over at his father, who sat staring at the evangelist with a look that betrayed as much fear as anything. Jacob did not know just what impression was being made upon him. But he was obliged to turn and listen to the speaker. There was that in his manner that compelled attention.

„This awful passion is to-day prevalent everywhere. It is to be found in the university and in society under the guise of betting; betting on athletic contests, on literary tournaments. It is to be found in business in the form of lotteries arranged whereby successful holders of certain tickets become entitled

to certain privileges as buyers or certain prizes in valuable goods. It is to be found in the newspaper world in certain inducements offered to guess the missing word in a printed paragraph, each one guessing to send a quarter to the paper and stand a chance of getting a division of all the money sent in, which is to be shared equally by all who guess the right word. This form of gambling has recently been introduced into America after having done untold harm in England and proving such a curse that it has finally been forbidden by law. Yet one of the influential society papers of New York has opened up this form of gambling under the alluring title of a "Literary Contest." It is simply an attempt on the part of every person sending in a quarter to get something for nothing. And that is gambling.

It is to be found in the church wherever in the desire to make money articles are raffled for, or sold at fairs by auction for ten times what they are worth, or given away to the persons guessing a certain number of things in a glass jar, or in any other device by which the attempt is made to get something without giving an equivalent. It is to be found, this gambling craze, in all kinds of games where at the price of a small sum the inducement is held out of getting larger sums. It is to be found on the stock exchange where it is the daily struggle of men called civilized and respectable to buy for next to nothing and sell at an enormous figure. It is to be found in hundreds of gambling dens in this city, some of them within hearing distance of my voice, where men throw away the hard earnings of toil and young life is

experiencing the bitterness of hell on earth in the delirium of expectation. Under all these forms and guises and disguises the gambling madness is the same all over the world and its one great endeavor is to get something for nothing. I hold in my hand a letter which was once written to his son, by one of the most manly men that ever lived. Remember, young men, it is a common feeling that it is manly to bet and gamble a little. That it is babyish and sentimental to get into a serious way of thinking about this great evil. Listen to this letter written by one of the most splendid Christian gentlemen that ever lived, Charles Kingsley.

Mt Dearest Boy, - There is a matter which gave me ranch measiness when you mentioned it. You said you had put into some lottery for the Derby, and had hedged to make safe. Now all that is bad, bad, nothing but bad. Of all habits gambling is the one I hate most and have avoided most. Of all habits it grows most on eager minds. Success and loss alike make it grow. Of all habits, however much civilized men may give way to it, it is one of the most intrinsically savage. Historically, it has been the peace excitement of the lowest brutes in human form for ages past. Morally, it is unchivalrous and unchristian.

1. It degrades men by the lowest and most unjust means, for it takes money out of your neighbor's pocket without giving him anything in return.
2. It tempts you to use what you fancy your superior knowledge of a horse's merits or anything else to your neighbor's harm. If you know better than your

neighbor you are bound to give him your advice. Instead, you conceal your knowledge to win from his ignorance; hence come all sorts of concealments, dodges, deceits. I say the devil is the only father of it. I hope you have not won; I should not be sorry for you to lose. If you have won, I shall not congratulate you. If you wish to please me you will give back to its lawful owners the money you have won. As you had put in you could not in honor draw back till after the event. Now you can give back the money, saying that you understand that the head master and I disapprove of such things and so gain a very great moral influence. I collect that the stock argument is worthless. It is this: My friend would win from me if he could, therefore I have an equal right to win from him. Nonsense! The same argument would prove that I have a right to maim or kill a man if only I give him leave to maim or kill me if he can and will.

I have spoken my mind once for all on a matter on which I have held the same views for more than twenty years and trust in God that you will not forget my words in after life. I have seen many a good fellow ruined by finding himself short of money some day and trying to get a little by play or betting. The Lord have mercy on his simple soul, for simple it will not long remain. Mind, I am not the least angry with you. Betting is the way of the world. So are all the seven deadly sins under certain rules and party names, but to the devil they lead if indulged in, in spite of the wise world and its ways.

Your loving friend,
C. KINGSLEY.

Oh, the world is not very wise in this matter! Who can paint the horrors of this great passion? Who can tell the tears it has caused, the broken hearts of wives and mothers, the crying of children, the ruin of character, the devastation of all principle? We have asylums and refuges and reformatories for almost all the crimes and diseases and passions of men, but who will provide a remedy for this great madness of gambling? It appears to me sometimes like the great cardinal sin, because it seems as if the gambler was the most lost to all manhood and most removed from the thought of God and Christ.

But — look ! It says in the blessed Book from which we read to-night, 'Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' It says ' God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.' „Whosoever“ nobody is shut out. Whosoever means infidels, liars, drunkards, yes, gamblers, sinners, anybody who believes in Jesus Christ, shall be saved. God's mercy is sufficient. All you have to do is to look to Him. Is there a gambler here tonight who feels that he has lived for long years despising God, cheating his neighbor, living dishonestly, cursing instead of praying, perhaps with the memory of cruelty which was almost crime towards those who depended on him for bread and affection - is there one such, even such a one, even he, may bow his heart in repentant thanksgiving before the Saviour of the world and beg forgiveness, knowing that all the past shall be wiped out of God's

thought and eternal life shall be sure, sure. O my brother, my heart hungers to see you come and throw yourself upon his mercy! - that mercy so boundless, so free, so loving, so powerful. Won't you come? Won't you? Say! Suppose you stop to think of the future. Only a few years at the most of this life, and then eternity! What will that be to you, my brother? Will it be bliss or pain? Will it be joy or grief to you? Hear the Spirit pleading with you. Today - to-day - now, this moment, give your heart to Him and it will mean a world of peace to you, a new life with God."

The great congregation, mostly men, sat hushed as the evangelist went on with his appeal for hearts and pictured the love of God in simple terms that brought tears into the eyes of those who were not accustomed to weep. He closed his appeal with another prayer, and then asked any persons in the audience who wanted to confess Christ before men to stand up. A dozen persons rose near Jacob, and what was his astonishment when his father slowly got up, and stood with the rest. He did not know what to think of it. When the meeting was over, and people were going out he wondered if he had better wait with his father and go into one of the after or inquiry meetings to which all new converts were invited. He asked his father if he would stay, but he replied in a low tone that he would rather not; they could come again the next night.

So Jacob took his arm and went out into the night. He seemed confused with the astonishing event. His father seemed strangely silent. Perhaps, thought

Jacob, he is even now having a conflict with himself. When they reached the lodging place and went up to their plain room the father sat down in a chair and covered his face with his hands.

Jacob sat awhile and looked at him. He had not yet come to love the wretched soul who had cursed his mother so deeply, and finally broken her heart, after ruining her financially. But now a feeling of pity stole into his thought as he sat looking at the abject crouching figure. He finally said, "Father, shall I pray?"

The father nodded, and Jacob kneeling by the bed prayed aloud, a thing he had never tried before. It brought him relief. He poured out his soul for his father, and prayed that in his action that night he might be blessed and come to feel the peace of pardon and enter on a new life.

When he rose from his knees his father said, evidently with some feeling, "Jacob, I have been an awful bad man. I have not lived as I ought."

"That is true, father. But God is merciful; if he will forgive you I certainly can not hate you any longer. Do you believe in his mercy?"

"Yes, Jacob, I believe. I have lived wickedly."

They talked together a little longer, and Jacob began to have hopes that the Spirit of God had really touched that hardened soul. When he finally went to sleep he felt more at peace with the world than for a long time. He was very tired with the events of the day, and the anxiety concerning his father's condition largely gone, he slept very soundly.

He woke in the late dawn of the next day with a start

to find that his father was not with him. Like a flash a suspicion as to the truth of his disappearance smote Jacob as with a real blow, and with trembling hands he felt for his pocketbook. It was gone, with the forty-five dollars in bills! He felt in his other pockets and they were empty. Not a cent of change was left! With a white face and a beating heart he realized the truth that in all his pretended conversion at the meeting, and in his after talk his father had been shamming. His cunning purpose had been all along to put Jacob off his guard so as not to be watched too closely. Then he had evidently planned how he could steal the money and get out of the house. O awful spirit of gambling! How mighty thou art! Thou canst defy the Omnipotent ! Thou art terrible in thy power ! Thou art a curse to the souls of men!

Jacob's first thought after discovering the theft was to rush out of the house and hunt for his father. He felt quite sure he would go at once to some gambling hell with the money. He reproached himself bitterly with his lack of wisdom in giving his father any money in the first place. He did it simply for fear his father was in actual need of food, and also thinking to prevent his following him any more. But all that had been done and could not be undone. Then Jacob remembered that he had not paid anything for the room and the woman who rented it would naturally be suspicious if he did not offer to pay in the morning. He waited. As soon as the house was awake he went down into the dining room, asked to see the boarding house keeper and told his story, all

excepting the fact of relationship between his father and himself.

The woman who kept the house was a kindly but shrewd person. She looked full at Jacob a minute and then said, "You look truthful, but there 's lots like you that is rogues. You owe for lodging half a day and night. I didn't ask you for pay in advance because I thought you was in trouble when you came, but if this is a trick on the part of you two to get out of paying I can't afford to stand it. I 'm willing to help honest folks but I haven't got a cent to help the other kind."

Jacob thought a minute. "I'll stay here while you send some one over to the International Hotel to a friend of mine. He'll bring the money to pay what I owe. Will you get the note to him ? "

"Of course I will."

So Jacob asked for a piece of paper, and wrote a note to Paul asking him to come as soon as possible. The woman found that one of the boarders was going past the hotel and was willing to leave the note. So Jacob sat down in the dining room and waited. He was not hungry. He could not eat anything. He sat there and waited and thought. His heart was filled with conflicting emotions as he reviewed the previous day.

Half an hour went by and then the bell rang. The servant went to the door, and Jacob heard his name called. The next moment Paul came in. Jacob started to say a word and then stopped, shocked at Pauls appearance. He was pale and agitated.

" What's the matter ? Have you" — began Jacob.

Paul for answer held out a telegram for Jacob to read.

Out on the prairie that winter the inmates of the log house had spent very many lonesome hours. The winter had been mild, and David had worked almost every day cutting and hauling wood on shares. Ruth had bravely endured the long quiet hours with her mother. To one who has never cared for a helpless invalid, one who can neither talk nor move very much, it is hardly possible to convey the exact meaning of Ruth's task. She was a young woman now, strong, beautiful, reserved, but with a fine mind alive to all that was best in books and in actions. But she had deliberately cast out of her ambitions all thought of a career in the world. As long as her mother should live Ruth would live with her and by her.

It was beautiful to note how skillfully Ruth interpreted her mother's wants and put her thoughts into words. Mrs. Sidney had retained her mental vigor in almost the same degree as before her stroke of paralysis. She could move her lips in such a way as to convey some meanings, which Ruth had come to understand, and her eyes did the rest.

One day, about a month after Paul had left college for the hotel, Ruth was talking with her mother. David was in the room mending a harness. It was storming a little, and he had not gone down into the woods as usual. Ruth had just been reading one of Paul's letters aloud.

"That was a queer thing for Jacob to do, wasn't it?"

The idea of his leaving college to be with Paul! He must think a good deal of him to do that, don't you think so, mother? Yes, of course you do. What did you say? That Jacob was very generous to offer Paul that money? Well, now, Mommee, don't you think Paul ought to have taken it and tried to get some work in college? You don't? I do. No, I don't either, mother, if you think Paul did all right. You have better judgment than mine. Only it seems such a pity that Paul should have to leave college."

"That Jacob is a queer bird, isn't he?" said David. "The idea of his keeping all his money in silver dollars in that desk. What did mother say, Ruth? "

Mrs. Sidney had turned her eyes towards David, but he had not caught her meaning.

"Mother thinks Jacob must be very bright in mathematics to make so much money. Is that it, mother? " asked Ruth. " No? Then you want to say that you hope Paul will be able to enter the junior year in the fall, and go on with his studies? No, that is not it? " Ruth looked earnestly at her mother, and then asked, "Do you want to speak to David about something alone? Yes?"

The mother's eyes told Ruth that she had guessed right. So she went upstairs to her own room, and David got up off the floor, where he had been sitting with pieces of harness all about him, and came and sat on the side of the bed. He looked at the pale face and the frail form with the greatest affection.

"What is it, mother?" he asked.

For reply she turned her eyes towards the little shelf where the Bible was kept. David took it down, and

said, "Do you want me to read?" The mother signified that that was not exactly her wish. David turned to the concordance in the back of the Bible, and began to read the letters of the alphabet aloud. Sometimes the mother had desired certain chapters or passages read. When he reached the letter D, the mother signified that that was the letter she wanted. David read through a number of words until he reached the word "departure." "Is that it, mother? Do you want me to look up the verse? Yes? Well, it is in 2 Timothy 4: 6. Here it is. 'For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.' Is that the verse, mother? It is? What did you want me to read it for?" David paused as the thought swept over him, "Mother thinks she is going to die!" Then he recovered himself a little, and said stoutly, "Now, Mommee, you don't feel that you're going to leave us very soon, do you? Yes? No! Mommee, we can't spare you yet. You are no worse than you have been for a month? Yes? But you do not tell us."

David paused again. He could not control his voice. The great big muscular fellow who thought nothing of cutting three cords of wood a day all week long sat on the bed and trembled like a child. The mother looked! Love, anguish, desire, and yet through all a strange peace with God that man could not give nor take away, all these were expressed in that look.

Finally David spoke again. "Mother, you want me to send for Paul? No? Not yet? Well, I won't then. Will you tell me when? Yes? Do you think" - David shrank from speaking the word but finally he did - "that it will be soon? Yes? Oh, no, Mommee!"

David put his face down close to his mother's and sobbed. The action seemed almost terrible in one usually so undemonstrative.

The mother prayed. David felt it. She could not lift a hand to soothe him; she could not unloosen the string of speech to comfort him. But she could pray. O mother soul, shut up to that one thing, almost that alone, how powerful thou art still in thy omnipotent weakness!

This scene prepared David for what followed a few weeks later. Just why the mother wished to conceal from Ruth the feeling she had of her approaching departure David could hardly tell. Perhaps the mother herself could not have told the exact reason. But one day when David had come in to tell Ruth that Carl had begun to recover enough to give some account of his injuries, Mrs. Sidney made Ruth understand that she again wished to speak to David alone.

David at once asked, "Mother, do you want me to send for Paul? Yes? When? To-day? Yes? Is that what you want? I know. Mother I'll send at once. I'll telegraph."

The mother seemed pleased at this, and David went into town that morning. He first went to the doctor's, and told him about his mother's request. The doctor listened attentively, and advised sending for Paul.

"Do you think mother is going to die ?" asked David, quivering.

"There is this about it," replied the doctor cautiously. "Very often persons in your mother's condition have a certain indication of an approaching end which

can not well be discovered by anybody else. I would send the telegram. It will help her. And it is true she can not live much longer. You ought to know that, my dear fellow."

So David went into the office and sent the following:
"Come at once, Mother wants you."

This was the telegram that Paul handed to Jacob in the dingy little waiting room of the boarding house. He had received it almost at the same minute that Jacob's note had come to him.

Jacob read it and looked up sympathetically.

"Yes," said Paul in answer to Jacob's inquiry, "it means that poor mother is dying."

For the moment, Jacob's trouble seemed swallowed up in the greater sorrow that lay upon Paul.

CHAPTER XIII. Jacob's visit.

Paul broke the silence by saying, "Jacob, old man, I shall have to ask a favor of you. I must start right for home. But I haven't money enough to buy a ticket. Will you lend me ten or fifteen of your fifty, if you can spare it?"

"Didn't you read my note?" asked Jacob sorrowfully. "Of course," replied Paul looking perplexed. "You said you wanted to see me at once at this number. You didn't say what for."

"Didn't I? Well, I will now then." Jacob told Paul the story of his father's theft and disappearance.

"So you see instead of having fifty dollars to lend you I want you to pay my bill here so I can get away."

Paul was not so selfish with his grief or anxiety that he could not sympathize with Jacob's misfortune. He paid the boarding house keeper Jacob's little debt and the two walked out on the street.

"I shall have to get the money somewhere. I must start for home at once," said Paul

Jacob had been thinking rapidly and now he said, "Why don't you try Mr. Gordon ? He helped David when you were sick at Veronda."

"I'll do it! I know he would let me have what I need!" cried Paul. " Only I should have to go out of my way to see him."

"Did the telegram say that your mother was seriously ill? "

"No, it only said, Come at once, mother wants you."

"Then probably there is no immediate danger. Your mother feels herself failing and wants you. Perhaps she will live a good many days yet," said Jacob, shrewdly guessing at the condition of things on the farm.

"Do you think so ? Maybe you 're right. I'll start for Boston on the next train. But what will you do, Jacob ? You haven't a cent in the world."

" Oh, I'll be all right. I 've got a trade, and I can get work."

"What trade have you got, Jacob?" asked Paul wonderingly.

" The printer's. I can get work any time. I was in an office four years."

"You never told me," replied Paul astonished.

"You never asked me," replied Jacob.

So Paul went out of the city on the next Boston train leaving Jacob in the station looking at him gravely. Paul had remembered even in the midst of his grief that the landlord at the hotel had paid him ten dollars that were Jacob's due as waiter, and he insisted that Jacob should take it. Jacob at first refused, saying that Paul would need the money. But Paul answered that Mr. Gordon would help him out as he had promised to do many times, and at last Jacob took the money.

Paul found Mr. Gordon only too glad to help him in his trouble. He insisted on his taking a sum larger than was absolutely necessary. Paul a little proudly explained that he would of course regard it as a loan and pay it back as soon as possible.

Mr. Gordon made no objection. He followed Paul to the station and saw him off on the western express. In three days Paul was at home again. David had met him at the station and drove him out. Their mother was still living; indeed, David thought she seemed even brighter than usual. Paul was so relieved that he broke down, and cried as soon as he heard the news. This did him good, and when he reached the house and went in he was cheerful and almost happy.

He kissed Ruth, and went right into the mother's room. The thought that she could not put her arms about his neck as she used to almost choked him. But he kneeled down by the bed, and kissed her, and said, almost as in the old times before he had gone away to school, "Mother, wasn't I good to come when

you sent for me? Why, you are looking just as lovely! Ruth, mother looks beautiful! I'm going to stay home now, Mommee. And right here with you. I'll read to you, and tell you all about my queer chum Jacob, and we'll have the finest times."

Paul paused a minute. He was talking fast to keep from crying again. But the mother smiled at him so proudly. She eagerly noted how her boy had grown. The boy indeed was almost gone and the look of a man was on his face. His form was stalwart and his color bright; his health was perfect. All this seemed to satisfy her.

David came in, and the three children gathered in the room, the first time in four years. How the time had sped! David noted Paul's growth with pleased affection, and Ruth roguishly asked him how long since he had begun to wear a mustache.

"Now Ruth," he said coloring a little, for Paul had a sensitive vanity on that point, "don't you think it is becoming?"

"Yes, I think it will be coming - one of these days."

"Mother," said Paul "do you allow that kind of talk? I'm afraid you don't discipline Ruth as she needs it. What a beauty she is, isn't she, mother ? " And Paul looked admiringly at his sister, who laughed and replied, "I never knew I had such a handsome brother."

" Where do I come in?" asked David, good-naturedly.

" I would like to apply for membership to this mutual admiration society if the entrance fee is not too big."

"Why, David," exclaimed Paul turning to his older brother, " there isn't a finer looking fellow than you

are in all the university. Honest now. I don't believe there 's a man on the eleven who could down you, you young Hercules."

David, who had grown into a tremendously heavy and muscular fellow, grinned and seemed pleased enough. Paul turned to the mother again.

" Mother, we believe in standing up for the Sidneys, don't we? "

The mother smiled with her eyes and then they all sat in silence a few moments.

Paul had not asked his mother why she had sent for him. She seemed to be quite well and strong.

David told him, when they had gone to their room after the evening Bible reading, that she seemed even brighter than for a long time. Still, Paul could see that David was anxious. He had had another talk with the doctor, who warned him that the end might come at almost any time.

So the days passed, and Paul, spending almost all the time with the invalid, gradually saw a change coming over her. Still, she would rally from one sinking spell after another, and come back again; but each time the wave of that tide seemed to leave her a little farther from the shore of human life, and gradually to be bearing her farther out towards the boundless sea of that greater life which men call death.

The spring had come on. Little patches of snow still lingered in the deep hollows of the gullies, but the prairie was taking on its green mantle again and the air was growing softer every morning.

The invalid had made known her desire to have her

bed so placed that she could look to the east and see the sun rise.

One bright morning when the sun was so warm that Ruth had opened the two big windows in the south side of the house Paul sat talking to his mother. David had gone to town on some errands and Ruth was doing the housework, occasionally peeping into the invalid's room or coming in to sit down a few moments to chat while certain things in the oven were baking. Paul had been telling his mother about Jacobs experience with his drunken father. It had been two months and a half now since he had found Jacob at the boarding house.

„Has he heard of his father since then?" asked Ruth, who just then came in and heard Paul talking on the subject.

„No, Jacob wrote me two weeks ago, and said he had not heard a word from him."

„What has your chum been doing all this time ? Has he gone back to college?"

„No; he has been working at his trade. He's queer, Jacob is, but he thinks the world of me. What did you say, mother? " Paul had learned how to interpret his mother's talk. "That Jacob is to be pitied for having such a father? Yes. It's terrible. You see I was asleep at the time of that scene with him in the hotel lobby. Jacob has never told me his story yet."

The talk drifted on to other matters, and Paul inquired how Carl was getting on. He had recovered from his wounds and told his story, though he could not account for all the facts. It was thought by David that some of the men who had charged him with

theft at the quarries had waylaid him and shot him, but Carls account was not clear. He was able to get about but was still feeble, and had told David the last time he had gone to see him, that as soon as he was well he should get work on the "big ranch," as it was called, a place one hundred miles up the river. To all David's entreaties that he come and see his mother and Ruth, Carl had been obstinate.

"I would like to see him again. Ruth, what made you drive him away?" asked Paul, the teasing habit coming to him as in the old times.

"I didn't," answered Ruth, with the faintest possible color in her cheeks. "He ran away of his own accord. We were all sorry to have him go."

Paul looked at Ruth a little sharply and saw that she was sincere. Indeed, he had never doubted her.

"I would like to see him again. I must go over to Raymond's tomorrow and see him there," he said, while Ruth went into the other room.

Suddenly she called out, „David's coming back. I didn't know it was so late. And he is bringing some one with him. I wonder who it can be."

"Carl, perhaps," suggested Paul. "He said he was going to drive past Raymond's on the way back."

"No, it isn't Carl," replied Ruth after a pause.

The wagon rattled up to the house, and David called out to Ruth, who was still standing in the doorway, " Say, Ruth, put another potato in the kettle. We've got company. Let me introduce the distinguished traveler, Mr. Jacob Wendell, late of Boston."

"What!" cried Paul who had remained seated by his mother listening to all this. He rushed to the door

and in his eagerness pushed by Ruth, who luckily had fallen back a step or two, and threw himself upon Jacob, who had just got down out of the lumber wagon. Jacob returned his embrace with his usual gravity.

"Well, well, old man! Where did you come from! What on earth! If this is n't the -! I declare! "

Paul was getting hopelessly tangled up in his grammar and could only beam on Jacob with delight.

David said, "Well, why don't you take him in, and introduce him to mother and Ruth, while I put up the team?"

Paul seized Jacob by the arm and hurried him into the house. "Ruth, this is Jacob, my chum."

Ruth shook hands heartily and said, "We 're very glad to see you, Mr. Wendell. This is a pleasant surprise. Mother will be so glad to see you!"

"Do you tliink she will? " asked Jacob, who had never appeared so awkward in his own sight as he did at that particular moment.

„Of course she will, old man!" cried Paul. "Come right in! Mother, here's Jacob. He dropped down out of the moon, I guess. But then we all know he's queer and we ought not to be surprised."

Jacob came in and stood by the bed. He had learned about Mrs. Sidney's condition, and seemed to know just what to do. He bent down and kissed her hand with the air of a nobleman and said, with dignity, every particle of his awkwardness gone, "You will pardon me, madam, for coming all this distance uninvited to your home, when I tell you that I have

grown so homesick for a look at your son that I could not stay away from him another moment."

Mrs. Sidney smiled and a tear rolled over her cheek. Jacob looked at her reverently.

"Old man, is that so?" asked Paul, just to say something and choke down a cry.

"Well, I got tired of working in an office, and I had money enough to buy a ticket out here, and I felt lonesome; so I came. I can sleep in the barn or somewhere outdoors."

"Yes, we'll fix you up a nice little bunk out in the Cottonwood grove, Jacob," said Paul sarcastically "where there's plenty of fresh air and room. Old man, do you think we aren't going to treat you like one of the family! We'll give him ice cream and strawberries and potato salad three times a day, won't we, Ruth?" Ruth laughed, and replied, "You can be sure you're very welcome. We don't forget what you did for Paul when he was so ill at Veronda."

"He would have done the same for me," replied Jacob, who now that the family had given him the assurance of a hearty welcome seemed immensely relieved, and at once gave himself up to the delight, so new to him, of a cultured Christian home.

When David came in, he was so cordial to Jacob that he could not doubt that he was welcome. The mother could not say anything, but she seemed very happy at the unexpected event.

That evening after the Bible reading, which impressed Jacob strongly, the family lingered about the mother a little, and Paul asked Jacob to tell them all about his adventures since the time they had

both left the hotel.

"There isn't much to tell," replied Jacob slowly. " The day after you left I found a job in a printer's office, and I 've been there ever since. That's all."

"But why in the moon, Jacob, didn't you go back to college and go on? You can't afford to let all this time go to waste? "

"Why not? Whose time is it?" asked Jacob, who sometimes put singularly hard questions.

"Well, it's your time, I suppose. But I shouldn't think you would want to wait all this time before you go on with the course."

" I was getting lonesome," replied Jacob.

And all their questioning could not get anything more out of him. It was evident that he had really come on all that distance just to see Paul, and Paul could not blame him for such an act.

"It was just like Jacob," he said."Nobody else he ever knew would have done such a thing."

Paul felt proud of his old chum, while something gathered in his throat and moistened his eyes every time he looked over at the very plain face opposite.

Two weeks went by and Jacob made himself useful about the place. He helped David tend the stock, and soon made it very apparent that he was a great lover of animals. David was delighted with him. He could not say enough in his praise. Paul remained with his mother. As she grew weaker, she seemed to cling closer to her younger boy. He would have been her favorite if she had ever allowed herself any choice among the children.

Her end came very quietly but suddenly at last. It

was at the close of one of the Bible readings one night. They had not been expecting it. She had been bright and happy all day; had seemed interested in David's account of the outlook for crops; had listened with a smile to Paul's quizzing of Jacob about his fondness for milking, and had enjoyed the laugh that had gone around when Jacob told about the way one of the calves had run into him and tripped him up into the water trough.

Ruth had risen to kiss her mother, and David had begun to lock up the house as his custom was, when Mrs. Sidney raised herself up and Ruth gave a startled cry. For a moment they all thought the mother was going to speak. David was instantly at her side holding her in his strong arms. Paul and Ruth and Jacob drew closer, not knowing that the end was so near. The mother opened her lips, smiled on them all, and then, as if exhausted by the unusual effort, she fell back. Her eyes remained open, and Ruth spoke to her gently.

"Mother, are you in pain? Can we do anything for you? No? Do you want to say something? Do you want us to" —

The mother's eyes turned towards the shelf where Ruth had kept the well-worn Bible all those years. Ruth took it down.

„Shall I turn to some passage? Yes? Something we have been reading lately? Yes? To that passage in Revelation where it speaks of the celestial city? Yes? Here it is, dear mother." And Ruth read tremblingly, "And death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first

things are passed away."

Even as Ruth read, the invalid began to show that mysterious touch of the hand of the last enemy. The effect was so rapid they were all awed by it. Like a breath, like a wind passing over the face. Death fanned his wings over the frail form, over the angelic face, over the worn body, and God took the spirit home to dwell in blessedness with him. Ah, child of the Father of Paradise! The string of thy tongue is loosened now, and thou art chanting the praises of the Most High, and awaiting in blissful peace the coming of thy dear ones who must yet do the will of God a little while longer on the earth.

After the first shock was over, the children were troubled because they had not been able to bid the mother good-bye, and soothe the way of her going with loving caress and word.

"Dear, dear mother!" sobbed Paul, "how little we did, after all, to show how much we loved her!"

David groaned as he kneeled by the bed and stroked his mother's cheek, and folded back the gray hair from her brow. The undemonstrative one seemed to feel her departure the most.

But who shall say that if they could choose both time and manner of death they would be any more satisfied with their conduct? It is enough that into the lives of these souls who mourn that feeble body's decay, there has gone the influence of a soul that will abide with them to the judgment day, the strongest, sweetest, best of all influences and memories, even the influence of a loving, praying, Christian mother. Earth does not contain anything better. As long as

mothers are loved, as long as their memories endure, the sons of men, even those who have strayed away, shall be brought back to God.

In the days and weeks that followed it was perhaps well for the mourners' hearts that the work of the farm kept their bodies busy and their thoughts engaged in material things. David said, "Mother considered those notes that father signed as our honest debts to pay, and I am going to work until every cent is raised and paid. If you, Paul and Jacob, can stay and help me through with the work this summer, I can manage somehow to swing things after that, and you can go back to college."

At first Paul insisted that he would not think of such a thing as going back. He would spend his days with David on the farm. But David said, - "No, mother had her heart set on your going to college.

She wanted you to be a great preacher or teacher. I know. You must not disappoint her."

Paul finally yielded because he found that his distaste for the farm life was as strong as ever.

So he and Jacob worked steadily with David all summer. The crops were the finest ever known. The three young men, stalwart and rugged, did an astonishing amount of work, and David heaved many an honest sigh of relief as he reckoned on being able to nearly wipe out the mortgage with one more such season.

One afternoon when they were at work in the harvest field stacking grain the wagon with which they were hauling bundles broke down and David and Paul took it up to the barn to repair it, leaving Jacob

seated on one of the wheat stacks which stood about eight feet from the ground. While he was waiting there, Ruth came down with some oatmeal water from the house.

"Where are the boys ? " she inquired of Jacob, who stood on the edge of the stack and looked down at her.

"The wagon reach broke and they went up to the tool house to mend it," replied Jacob, with more embarrassment than such a simple fact would seem to call for.

„Aren't you pretty warm? " asked Ruth, looking up at him.

"I'm warm enough, but I ain't very pretty," replied Jacob, who knew as well as any one how plain he was.

Ruth was amused. " What do you mean by pretty?" she asked.

"When you look in the glass, you see what I mean, and when I look, I don't see it," stammered Jacob.

He was a little frightened at his attempt at a compliment. It was the first time he had ever made one.

But Ruth laughed. " I didn't know you could talk like that.. That 's more city than country, isn't it, Mr. Wendell ? "

"It's the truth," replied Jacob.

"Well, I think looks are what people make them," said Ruth, as she arranged the pail of water in a shady place behind some grain bundles.

"Then I must have made mine in a hurry," drawled out Jacob.

"I mean," said Ruth, "that after the people who are really worth anything come to know a person, they like him for what he is intellectually or morally. And if one thinks right thoughts and does noble deeds, after awhile his face will show it, and so in a certain sense every one is the molder of his own expression, the maker of his own face. Isn't that so?"

"Yes, but if one is good looking to start with don't you think it's an advantage?"

"I never cared anything about good looks in themselves," said Ruth decidedly. "Good health is worth a million times more."

Jacob did not reply to this, and Ruth changed the subject. "How much more wheat is in the shock?"

"What's left here and all of the ten acre piece west of the house."

"Do you like to stack?"

"Yes, I like all farm work."

"Isn't that queer? Paul says you are a wonderful mathematician, Mr. Wendell, and will make a great scholar some day. It will be lonesome for David and me when you two go off to college again."

"Do you expect to stay here on the farm with David?"

"Oh, yes," replied Ruth cheerfully. "We are going to work to pay off the mortgage. That was mother's wish."

"What will you do then?"

"I hadn't thought of that," replied Ruth frankly. "I believe I would like to study medicine and be a doctor."

"Allopath or homeopath? Would you prescribe pills or bottles?"

Ruth laughed again. "I haven't got as far as that. I would want to be up with all the latest discoveries. Did you hear of that woman who was the first in the world to be vaccinated for cholera ? I wish I had her chance."

"Do you think David ever cared for college?" asked Jacob after a pause.

"No," replied Ruth wondering. "David has always been a farmer."

"I believe he would make his mark as a student. He has a great taste for books."

"So he has," said Ruth eagerly. "Dear, noble David! He has stuck to the farm work like a hero. I wish he could have a college education. After the mortgage is paid off we must try to" —

Ruth went off into a brown study. Jacob from where he stood could see the boys coming down into the field with the wagon.

"Miss Sidney," he said, "if you were I what would you do for a profession after getting out of college?"

"Oh," laughed Ruth, "your hold is mathematics. I suppose you will become one of the most famous professors in the United States."

"I don't want to be a professor" said Jacob very slowly.

"What would you like then?"

"Why, I think I would take medicine," replied Jacob nervously.

"Allopath or homeopath? " inquired Ruth, with a pleasant laugh.

"I don't know as it would make much difference. I've thought may be I could go into partnership with somebody, and one of the firm could practice allopathy and the other homeopathy and so everybody would be suited."

Ruth was amused again. "That would be nice," she remarked in a careless tone. She didn't see Jacob's look, which might have told her something. Jacob mopped his face with his sleeve. Just then Ruth looked up at him.

"It is warm work, isn't it ?" she asked innocently.

"It's the hottest time I ever knew," replied Jacob desperately.

Just then David and Paul rattled up with the wagon, and Ruth went back to the house, and the first chapter in Mr. Jacob Wendell's romance was consigned to oblivion. He was very deeply in love with Ruth, who was the only girl he had ever known, but he said to himself, "It's no use! I never could work the conversation around so as to tell her. And then I'm so homely! If I thought all the noble thoughts in creation I couldn't make a pug nose over into a Roman. Oh, pshaw, you Jacob! You 're only great in one direction, a great big fool, with a drunken gambler for a father, and yet you go and fall headfirst in love with the most beautiful" —

Jacob got so angry with himself that he didn't see what he was doing and threw three big bundles of wheat over the stack and knocked Paul off the edge of the wagon.

" What's the matter, old man ? Are you intoxicated with that oatmeal water Ruth brought down? " cried Paul.

"I might as well be," Jacob murmured.

He worked with great energy the rest of the day and was very silent when it was ended. But then, he was queer, and the boys and Ruth thought nothing of it. When harvesting was over, Paul and Jacob went back to the University. David was able to let them have money for fares and something over. So Paul entered on his junior year, the memory of his mother ever with him to energize all his studies. He and Jacob found a room together this time.

Thus the days sped by and a year was gone. Paul was a senior now, and the end of his college course was in sight. He entered on its studies with a prayer that the God of his mother would help him to make the most of it. Through the last two years of Paul's college life he and Jacob had succeeded in getting work enough to do to help pay college expenses.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TWENTIETH DOOR.

The first half of the senior year had gone swiftly by, when, one evening in the middle of February, Jacob and Paul were having a talk together about old times and also about their plans for life after Paul graduated.

"What are you going to be?" asked Jacob.

"Haven't made up my mind yet. When I went away from home to enter Veronda I thought I would like to be the editor of a big city daily."

"Do you mean a daily in a big city or a big daily in a city? " asked Jacob.

"My ideas at the time were all 'big,'" laughed Paul. "I picked out journalism because I thought how fine it would be to sit in a nice upholstered newspaper sanctum and write leading editorials on great topics of the day."

"Don't you think that would be a good thing to do now? "

"Yes, but I 'm not so confident of doing it now as when I was a boy on the farm. And then," continued Paul, more thoughtfully, "I am every day more convinced of this fact: - The new century will call - it does call - for men who are ready to give more of their time and powers to the needs of humanity and not so much energy to fame and money making."

"Well, couldn't you serve humanity in a newspaper office? "

"To be sure, and nobly too. But I am not certain that I am called to do it in that way."

"Would you be a preacher?"

"I don't know. I might."

"Or a teacher?"

"If I had the patience," replied Paul with a smile.

"Or may be you would like to be a public lecturer?" suggested Jacob.

"I might," mused Paul. "Why not ? But isn't it a little strange I am so uncertain about it? There's one thing

sure," he went on after a little pause; "I do want to give my life to the greatest need that my particular makeup can help the most. I 'm not decided about the way I shall do it, but when the time comes, I suppose I shall be shown what it is. I want to accomplish something worth while in the world, don't you, old man? "

"Yes, I feel as you do about it. Only you will be a racer and I shall be a dray horse."

"Nonsense, old man! you know twice as much as I do."

"Maybe I do, but I don't know how to use it half so well. What's the good of brains unless you can turn 'em to account? It 's like having somebody make you a present of a set of false teeth when you haven't even had the toothache, or a wig when your hair is so thick and grows so fast that you have to cut it once a week to keep it out of your eyes."

Jacob spoke in so lowspirited a tone that Paul laughed at him.

"What's the matter, old man?"

"Oh, I 'm all right. The only trouble with me is that my abilities are bigger than my ambition."

"I believe you 're in love or something!" cried Paul, looking at him keenly.

Jacob appeared so alarmed at this statement, that Paul shouted, but seeing the trouble grow on his old chum's face, Paul changed the subject.

"There 's one thing I regret, Jacob, and that is that we are not going to finish the college course together."

"I shall not care to stay after you're gone," said Jacob, with a queer look that Paul did not understand.

"You certainly will finish the course ?" asked Paul.

"Oh, I suppose so. I wouldn't like to graduate as a junior."

"What will you do, Jacob? What are your plans for life work? "

Jacob did n't say anything for a minute. Then he said, "I thought one while of going into medicine, but I've given that up."

"I think you would make a good doctor."

"Do you ? Why?"

"Because you were such a good nurse. I don't forget that you probably saved my life." Paul looked across the table affectionately at the very plain face opposite.

"I shall not be a doctor, though," replied Jacob. "I'm too slow to succeed. And my looks are against me."

" What have looks got to do with medicine?"

"A good deal sometimes," replied Jacob as he called to mind a very beautiful face encircled with a broad-brimmed straw hat, and a very warm day in the harvest field, and a certain unfinished stack of wheat, and a little conversation about studying for the medical profession.

Paul sat thinking awhile and then said, "Well, whatever you do, Jacob, I'm sure will be done splendidly. Wouldn't it be fine if we could get in together somewhere ? Don't we know enough of something to be partners in it? "

"If each one of us could tell what the other doesn't know we might make a good living out of it. But I

don't feel like asking anybody to tie up with me."

"Why, what ails you, Jacob ? You 're awfully blue tonight."

"I'm thinking about my father," replied Jacob, with a slight blush as he recalled the fact that he had also been thinking of another person too.

"Have you heard anything of him lately?" asked Paul, with genuine feeling in his tone.

"No; that's the worst of it. I never know when he may appear."

"It's a terrible thing for you, Jacob." Paul put out his hand sympathetically. Jacob had told him his story.

"It's my burden. God help me to bear it," said Jacob quietly, and there was another pause.

" What do you hear from home lately?" asked Jacob.

"Oh, that makes me think. A letter from David this morning says everything is moving along first-rate. The winter so far has been mild and stock are in fine condition. He thinks if all goes well in the spring that the mortgage will be wiped out."

Paul paused, and Jacob sat silent. Then he asked, " How are the folks? "

"The folks?"

"Yes, the folks" repeated Jacob with some confusion.

"Why there aren't any folks but David and Ruth," laughed Paul.

"Well, how are they? " inquired Jacob stolidly.

"Oh, they're well. Ruth is anxious to go to school as soon as father's debts are paid off. She has been studying some this winter. Ruth has always wanted to be a doctor. Don't you think she would make a good one, old man ? There are splendid openings in

medicine, nowadays, particularly if one goes into some specialty. What specialty do you think Ruth would be good at?"

"I should think she might cure heart disease," replied Jacob stammering.

"Or cause it, eh? Do you know, old man, I thought one time last summer," blundered on the stupid Paul, "that you were in need of being doctored for some such ailment yourself. Ruth is a beauty and" —

At that moment Jacob looked up, and Paul caught his expression. The ordinarily plain face could be very eloquent at times, and this time it told the whole story.

Paul uttered an ejaculation of some kind, and Jacob buried his head in his arms and flung them on the table, crying out, "It's no use. I'm a big fool; she doesn't care for me. And there's my father!"

Paul tried to console him, but Jacob would not talk of it; and before they went to sleep that night Jacob made Paul promise that he would never mention the subject again.

Paul promised, and Jacob went about his college work apparently the same as ever. But into his isolated, homeless, hungry life had come a personal romance that was a bitter sweet to him.

So the college year slipped rapidly along until the senior appointments were given out. According to college customs the names of the Commencement speakers were read aloud after chapel exercises. Paul was announced as the orator for the English thesis, a place of honor, number four from the valedictorian.

"It's a good position. The very one I would have chosen for myself!" said Paul with enthusiasm as he and Jacob talked over the appointment that evening.

"What will you write about?"

"I've got so many things I want to say that I don't know what to choose. What would you do in my place, old man?"

"Oh, I'm no speaker. It would take me all day to speak the regular oration of two thousand words."

"But what would you choose for a subject if you were in my place ? "

"I would choose what I knew most about and felt most for."

"Would you choose a subject with a moral?"

"Why not? What is the good of the education unless it's moral ? And who cares to hear a college graduate talk about Greece, or Rome, or the French Revolution, or culture and all that, when the age in which we live is so full of need and calls for such heroic powers? "

"Good for you, Jacob ! If you could only increase your speed a little you would do on the platform. Let me see. How would it do to take up the great questions of the day, not to discuss them as questions but to call attention to the needs of humanity. This is what I mean: - For instance, here is the fact of intemperance, and the fact of gambling, and the fact of Sunday desecration, and the fact of the unequal struggle for wealth, and the fact of the physical in education at present being over emphasized. Say those five things. The century is just coming to a close. Now what can we do with these facts as a new

century begins? Given these opportunities to display our manhood and these facts to face and these questions to answer, what can we best do to prove the value of our education? How can we make the best use of the things we have been getting in our college course? What has the next century got within its possibilities for our powers? Do you think that will be too much like preaching? "

"Needn't be. And what if it is? The fellows can stand it, can't they? "

"I hope so. I shall have to write something along that line if I follow your directions. But what would you call it?"

"Did you say you wanted to speak of these great evils as opportunities?"

"Yes, that's my idea. Opportunities to prove our manhood and make our education useful."

"Why not call your oration „The Twentieth Door“ then? Let the Twentieth Century stand for the entrance to the largest opportunities ever offered the human race. Fling open this door in your oration, and give us a look at the possible powers and enthusiasm of a Christian manhood in the grandest century that man has yet known!"

"Splendid! I'll do it!" cried Paul excited. "I don't know very much, but I do have some honest convictions all my own on temperance, gambling, Sunday desecration and other evils, and I would like to express them before I leave college. „The Twentieth Door“ will give me just the opportunity I need."

So Paul set to work with all the enthusiasm of his impetuous nature to fling upon paper what he knew

and felt, and then commit it to memory as fast as he could. That oration cost Paul many a hard day's work. And when it was done he felt as if it did not express his ideas as he wished. But Jacob told him it was good because it contained what he knew and what he felt. Those were two of the things, according to Jacob Wendell, that a public speaker ought always to be sure about before he attempted to influence people by public speech.

The spring term drew on, and four weeks before Commencement Paul went in to take his examinations for his degree. His class was separated into a number of sections and his different examinations called him by turn into different divisions. The second day, while writing out his papers in English Literature, he looked up and saw, to his astonishment, Jacob, only a few seats away, writing for dear life, his shaggy head bent over the paper and his whole attitude expressing the greatest determination. When the hour was up and the division had handed in its papers, Paul seized Jacob as they were going out into the hall and exclaimed, "What are you up to, old man ? Are you trying for the chair of English Lit?"

"I thought I would try the exam, and see if I could pass. It was easy; didn't you think so? "

"No, I missed questions three and four and made frightful shots at seven and eight. But what are you taking it for, Jacob ? "

"Oh, just to see what I can do."

That was all Paul could get out of him.

During the day he saw that shaggy tousled head

and plain face in the examinations on Greek and physics, chemistry and political economy, mental science and Evidences, and all the rest as they followed one another that day and the next. Paul thought it was a freak on Jacob's part. The undergraduates were sometimes allowed to take the graduating examinations if they wished to.

But the third day Jacob told Paul what he was doing. " You see I don't care to stay in college after you're gone, and so I 've been making up one year's studies in advance. I had mathematics enough, anyway. I managed to get up the other subjects at odd times. While you 've been tutoring and teaching night schools this year I 've been working them up. I want to graduate when you do. I believe I can pass in everything except political economy, and I may get through that, if I can only write a paper that nobody can understand. Then the examiners will think it's awfully deep and learned."

Jacob drawled all this out in his sober fashion and Paul did n't know whether to laugh or cry. Finally he laughed (but there was a trace of tears in it), and said, "Old man, I appreciate all that. We will sink or swim together, won't we?"

"On the same plank," said Jacob simply.

When one week later the papers were handed in, Jacob had received higher marks on some subjects than Paul. Paul was delighted.

"Come, old man, you speak my graduating oration for me! It belongs to you, by rights!"

"Thank you, but I don't crave fame. I 'm willing you should do the preaching. I'll say Amen. That's all I'm

good for."

So Paul came up to Commencement feeling as most college boys feel at that time, mingled regret and satisfaction. He was glad for his mother's sake that he had finished the four years with honor. He was proud as he thought of Jacob that it had fallen to his lot to have so wonderful a friend. He was serious as he looked ahead and remembered that he still had his profession or life work to choose. As he walked out when his turn came, and spoke his piece before the great chapel full of college men and graduates and distinguished visitors, he was almost free from the egotism and self-confidence that had marked the early part of his school life.

The title of Pauls oration did not convey any information concerning its contents. So when the president announced the English oration entitled, "The Twentieth Door," by Paul Sidney, there was an air of expectancy in the audience. Paul was of good stage presence. He was generally respected by the college even where his strong opinions did not meet with favor. And every one of the college knew that whatever he might say would be said not for effect but because he meant and felt every word of it as true.

Paul began quietly.

"There is a Door which is beginning to open to the souls of this generation, a Door which is opening wider with every swing of the earth about the sun, and through that Door millions of lives will enter into a region of possibilities greater and grander and more full of responsibility than have ever been

known to the world. That Door is the twentieth century. And when it is flung wide open, as it will be in a few short years, it will present a variety of opportunities where the Christian man and woman may exercise all their powers to the glory of God and the salvation of men. It is my purpose to speak of some of those opportunities and influence some here present, it may be, to resolve that as for them they will make some one of these opportunities the aim of their lives, centering all their enthusiasm, intelligence, youth, ambition and character about the great needs of the human creature who was made in the image of the divine.

"As this high door of the twentieth century, then, is swinging open, let us look in and note these opportunities for glorifying God and saving men."

1. The Opportunity against Intemperance,

Every year the drink craze grows in intensity and volume. More human beings are drinking intoxicants now than ever before in the history of the world. There are more saloons and more fashionable wine houses and distilleries than the world ever knew before. The amounts of money made by the sale of liquor and the numbers of people engaged in the liquor business are enormous and rapidly increasing. All this in spite of the organized efforts of good men and women to blot out this foul stain on the world. All this in spite of the fact that medical science claims to have discovered a cure for the drunkenness of the toper. Granted that hundreds of men are reclaimed by the various establishments lately organized, that fact does not begin to compare

with the fact that while one man is being reclaimed a thousand are being damned by the drink. Yes, though women's hands are lifted up to God against this curse and though medical science has found a means to take away the drunkard's taste, no age of the world will call for so much against the saloon, no gigantic sin of the age will rear itself up so high on earth against the pearly gates of heaven in the twentieth century as this fearful appetite. Oh, all men brave and true, ye who still feel the kiss of your mother's lips on your brow, ye who boast of your courage, or learning, or noble birth, swing open the Twentieth Door and look in and see this opportunity awaiting you. An opportunity that calls for the highest courage, the sublimest faith, the most untiring activity.

2. The Opportunity to fight the growing spirit of Pride in the Physical Nature of Man,

It is only a few months ago that the whole country paused in breathless interest over a brutal prize fight between two professional pugilists. Hundreds of thousands of dollars changed hands over the result, hundreds of newspapers that go into all the cultured and Christian homes of this country gave whole pages to detailed descriptions of the brutal affair. In the midst of this horrible notoriety of two of the biggest' sluggers' in the world, one of the most famous poets and patriots this country ever knew passed away, receiving a dozen lines notice from the Associated Press of America. It was a marked illustration of the fact that the admiration of physical strength is a powerful thing in our civilization. That

admiration is growing with every decade. What, under certain restrictions, is a blessing to the soul and mind of man is becoming even in our Christian colleges a menace, and a dangerous menace, to the cause of all true education. When the twentieth century Door has swung wide open there will be found this opportunity, the opportunity of men who believe in a well-proportioned manhood to utter our protest and fight against this growing evil, this threatening physical god that has been exalted so high even in the mind of the college men of the world. To exalt the physical too much is to debase instead of honor the bodies that God made.

"3. The Twentieth Door will open upon the opportunity to strike at that great root of selfishnessy the love of money,

There is some reason for the popular saying, ' The poor are growing poorer and the rich are growing richer.' Fifty years ago there were only two millionaires in this country. To-day there are 4,047 men in America who are worth over a million, some of them counting their hundreds of millions, while there never was so much discontent and want and distress and suffering among the poor in the big cities as today. There never were so many strikes, so much bitterness between rich men and poor men, so many speeches spoken, so many songs sung, so many books written, so many minds at work on the problem of poverty. And the problem is growing more complicated every year. When the Twentieth Door has opened wide to you and me and all the young life of the world, there will stand close by the opening a

figure beckoning to us with a grave and commanding gesture. She will point to this tremendous opportunity and cry aloud, 'Come, ail ye men of genius and education and noble thinking and living, come, behold the desolation and weeping and woe and trouble caused by the love of money, which is a root of all kinds of evil. Come, all true souls that God has made, come and fight this monster that bids fair to make the earth a desert and civilization a mockery!'

And what will we do, O men of this century and the next? The Door is opening, the opportunity will certainly confront us there.

4. Another great opportunity will most certainly meet us all as the Twentieth Door turns on its hinges inward. And that will be the opportunity to fight the horrible monster called gambling, A passion! A thirst! A possession! An evil spirit! A curse! America, England, Europe, the world, is in its clutch. It is a hydra-headed monster. It masquerades in society, in politics, in literature, in the church. It is reaching out after legitimate trade until honest business men are beginning to say, we can not compete, we can not succeed, unless we speculate, unless we gamble, unless we attract custom by promising chances for certain goods by lottery.' The young men who are loitering in this vestibule of hell are to be numbered by the thousands. Fathers and mothers do not begin to know the extent of this hideous evil. The gambling houses and other places where boys and youth are every day learning to indulge this passion are growing in number all over the world until, according

to reliable figures, there are more places where gambling of some sort is taught and])racticed than there are churches and schoolhouses in all the world. And the twentieth century will see this great sin of this dying nineteenth century even more defiant and destructive than ever. What will you do about it, O man of education and of leisure ? What will you do about it, ye men of business and statesmanship ? What will you do about it, O ye fathers and mothers who will die out of this world of flesh just after stepping through the Twentieth Door, but with the knowledge that your sons and daughters will have the best or the worst of their manhood or womanhood at the threshold of the coming century? The opportunity will certainly say to us all, — „What will you do with me?“

"5. And among all the other opportunities in the coming time will he the grave and divine opportunity of preserving the Lords Day commonly called Sunday, from desecration and abuse.

Already it is the boast of civilization that it has discovered a better definition of Sunday than the Bible has to offer. Already it is the struggle of the foreign element crowding into this land to make the American Sabbath like their own. Already it is the custom of men high in station and in power to cry out against what they call the restriction of their personal liberty when it is suggested that Sunday be kept free from the things of other days. Already a free and sometimes impudent public sentiment demands that all the bars be thrown down, and horse racing, ball playing, theaters, and outdoor concerts of the

most disgraceful character be allowed, to the complete demoralization of all that Christ would hold most dear and sacred. When men say that the Lord's Day is in danger they are not talking foolishness. They see the storm coming. They feel the danger near. They know what awful results follow a desecration of this holy time. They know that destruction and chaos await the nation and the individual that tramples on this divine institution. And they look into the twentieth century and ask themselves, What shall be done there? For this question will not be speedily or easily answered. It will be one of the great opportunities offered to every son and daughter of God who opens the Twentieth Door. What will you do to preserve this day of God? This also awaits us all in the coming time. It stands close inside the yet unopened door.

Behold the opportunities then! And these are only a few out of many that will be there. Any one of them will call for a giant's strength, a hero's courage, a martyr's endurance. Young life all over this planet of God is reaching out today after the things that please the senses and minister to the physical passions. Great and Almighty Creator of our souls, is it possible that in the midst of such stupendous opportunities to overcome the devilish selfishness of the world we can be of the number of those who are eager to get fame or money, to please ourselves, to indulge our passions and go through the earth life adding to its load of misery instead of doing our share to lift it off? See, the Mighty Door is opening! A few years and it will stand wide. And we must enter

in. We can not help ourselves. All humanity must pass through the doors of the centuries. When the Twentieth Door hears the sound of our footsteps, may it be the military sound of those who are marching through the awful portals armed with the weapons of spiritual warfare, and shouting that old but not wornout Christian battle cry, For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places !

"O glorious opportunities of the twentieth century ! The God who made us men help us to quit ourselves as such! It does not make so much difference to us what we do as what we are. In any profession or business we may fight Right's battles and overthrow Wrong's battlements. But the twentieth century will demand giants, heroes, warriors, mighty men, martyrs, Christs. It will be the greatest century men have ever seen — great in wickedness and great in goodness; great in science and great in revolutions; great in knowledge and wealth, and great in ignorance and degradation. The man without a noble purpose, the man who is willing to live for his own petty amusement, the man who does not care enough for the blessings of the world to sacrifice something of his own ease and pleasure for its good will be ground between the mill stones of the mighty events that will occur when the earth shall write its calendar with the figure 1901. See, the time approaches ! The Door opens! Let us enter with a prayer, and tread our enemies and the enemies of

mankind and the enemies of the Grod of souls into the dust of oblivion. The Twentieth Door is open! Come, let us enter in, and do our duty. Truly we shall pass this way but once."

Paul finished and walked off, while only faint applause marked the close of his speech. He never knew all the criticisms that were freely made upon his oration. Nearly all the audience were of the opinion that it was too much like preaching! They did not like it. The direct criticisms of the college men came to Paul's ears before the day was over. They were almost unanimous in condemning him for using the occasion to preach a sermon.

At first Paul felt very much depressed. He had gone up to his room in the evening, and had sat down by the window watching the lights on the campus, which was illumined for the great promenade concert which closed the college exercises of the day. In the darkness of the room he was thinking over the college course and wondering if he could be of any use in the world, could lay hold of some opportunity. Or was it, as he had overheard one man say with a sneer, "A very pretty sentiment but not practical, you know?" He sat and thought of the farm, of David and Ruth, and their struggles, of his own fight with poverty, the uncertainty of the future, of - he was in a brown study when Jacob came in and sat down in the adjoining window seat.

Paul at once said to him, " Jacob, did I make a fool of myself today in my little say?"

"It was not like the regulation college oration. That's why folks didn't take it all right. You had no

business, they think, to go contrary to custom in the matter."

"I tried to say what I knew and what I felt. What is the good of public speech unless we do that? Don't you think so, Jacob? That is what you said."

"Yes," cried Jacob almost passionately. "Yes for God, Paul! If I had the gift of speech, I would go upon the platform, and pour out my soul against some of the evils I know and I feel. Oh, how the world has abused the divine right and privilege of human speech!"

He was silent a minute; then he said, "Your oration was a good one. It doesn't make any difference how many little people criticise and find fault. They don't know. They are trying to measure the Almighty with their inch rule."

Paul felt pleased with his old chum's defense. He valued his opinion highly. It seemed possible to him, after all, that he might do something in that twentieth century he had talked so earnestly about in the morning.

"Jacob, old man," he said softly, "whatever we do in the world now from this on, we will do it to the glory of God and the good of men, won't we?"

"Yes, the Almighty helping us, we will. See, Paul! The lights down there are going out one by one. But up in the sky the stars shine as ever. So I think the little glowworms of earth's passions and ambitions will die out of the world and God's light in heaven shine calmly on."

"It's true," spoke Paul softly. As he spoke a prayer went up out of his heart that he might so do his duty in the world that when he met his mother at last, he

might not be ashamed to see her and the Lord she loved so well on earth.

Somewhere in this great world of ours, these characters, a part of whose lives has been revealed in this story, are at this time working, struggling, planning, living today just as you and I have to work, struggle, plan and live. David, Ruth, Paul, Jacob, Carl, each one with his own temptations, discouragements, successes, failures, opportunities. Why should we hold the curtain up any longer to watch the play of their lives? Into the near century they are going with all the rest of us who shall be permitted to act our part in that mighty play of life. In the beginning of that century they will perhaps shed many tears, share many sorrows, fight many battles, pray many prayers. We shall also do the same. But God grant that they and we may so do our part and so fulfill our design that when the Twentieth Door opens to us we may enter gladly and prayerfully and hopefully in to do the work which God has given us to do, to live the lives He has given us to live for the glory of his kingdom, world without end.